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CLASH LEGEND REMEMBERED

JOE STRUMMER

A true rock rebel

Pages 3, 4, 5, 20, 21, 22, 23

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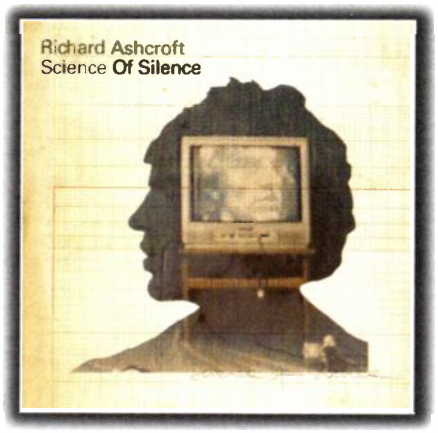

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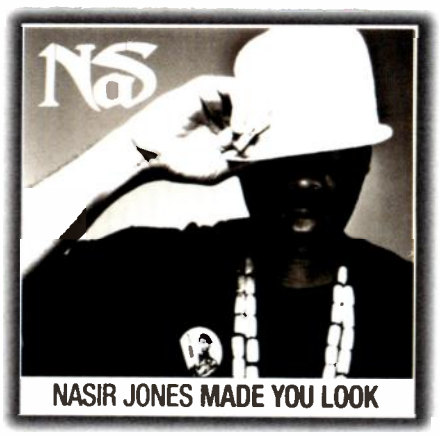

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CLASH FRONTMAN'S DEATH STUNS THE ROCK WORLD

HEART ATTACK CLAIMS THE LIFE OF A TRUE ROCK REVOLUTIONARY

Shortly after the completion of the January 4 issue of *NME*, the news came through that **The Clash**'s **Joe Strummer**, was dead. In this issue we pay tribute to one of the most influential rock artists of all time.

The passing of the 50-year-old guitarist, singer and songwriter stunned the music industry and sent shockwaves across the world.

Strummer was at home in the Somerset village of Broomfield (December 22), where he was preparing for Christmas with his wife Lucinda and immediate family.

After returning home from taking his dogs for a walk he collapsed and died of a sudden heart attack.

On pages 4 and 5, *NME* gives a full account of what happened, and the tributes which have been paid, while on pages 20-23 there is an in-depth appreciation of his life and influence.

JOE STRUMMER 1952-2002

To put it simply, **Joe Strummer** was the political face of punk and in the late-'70s with **The Clash** produced three classic albums that are still seen – including by the cream of the new rock bands – as the most influential ever made.

Born John Graham Mellor in Ankara, Turkey in 1952, the son of a British diplomat, Joe Strummer began his musical career playing with gritty pub rockers **The 101ers**. In the mid-'70s he joined forces with west London based guitarist **Mick Jones** and bassist **Paul Simonon** as The Clash. The trio, along with original drummer **Terry Chimes** and later **Topper Headon**, emerged as one of the most important bands in the 1976 punk explosion. Always political and edgy, public school-educated Strummer and Jones swapped songwriting and singing duties within the band.

Their first three albums, 1977's 'The Clash', the following year's 'Give 'Em Enough Rope' and the double 'London Calling' (1979), are three of the defining albums of that era. 'London Calling' continues to be hailed as one of the all-time great rock releases.

Until the release of 'The Clash', punk's influences were narrow. In the space of 14 songs Joe Strummer threw away the rule-book, mixing all the influences in his head, and even covering Junior Murvin and Lee 'Scratch' Perry's 'Police And Thieves'.

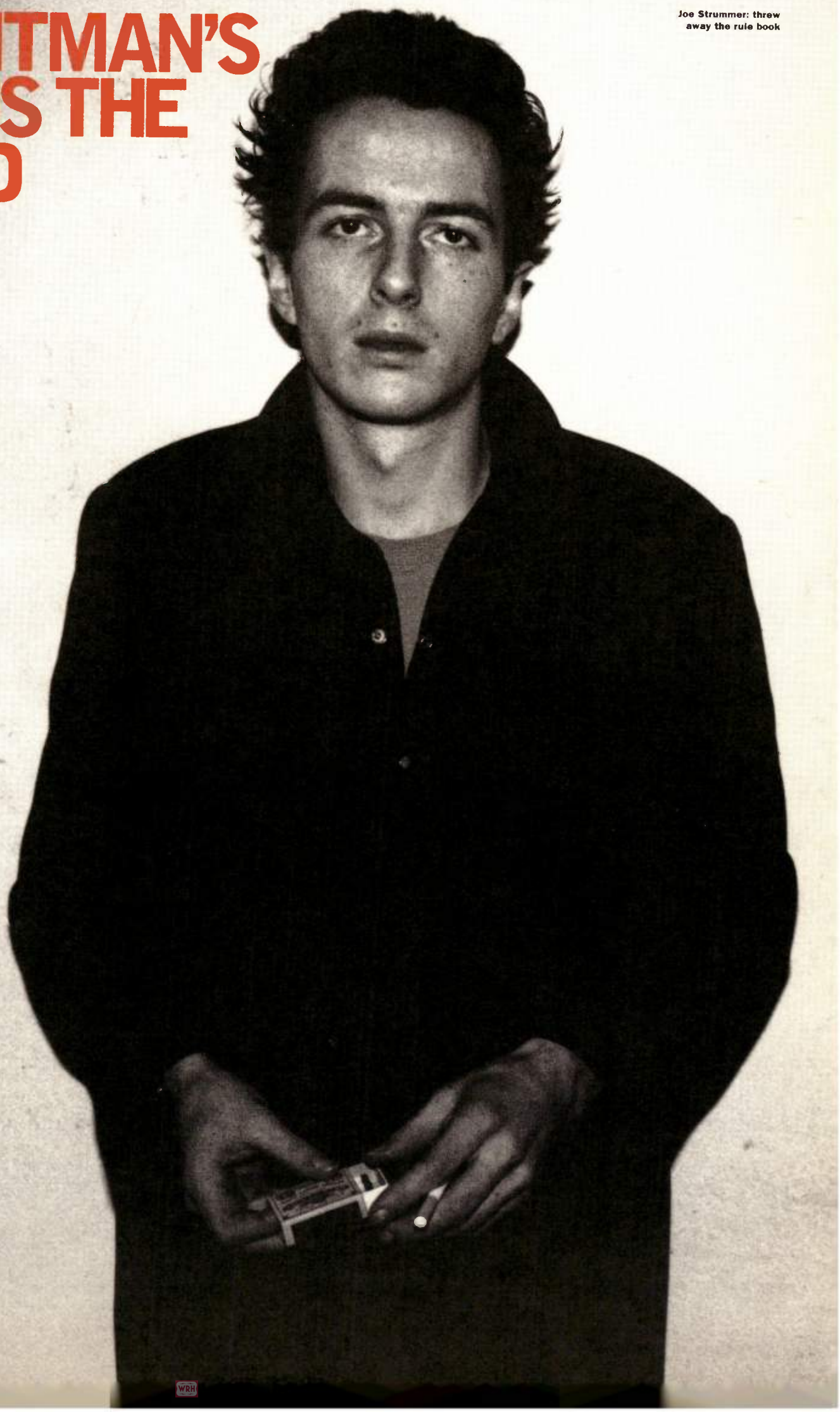
But within two years, Strummer and The Clash wouldn't just be covering roots music, they were infusing it into the very essence of their songs. The beauty of 'London Calling' is in its sheer diversity. It manages to do what very few other albums have done before or since, blend politics and music in an exciting and timeless way, without ever appearing patronising or po-faced.

By the time they released 'Sandinista!' in 1980, it would have been an insult to refer to The Clash as simply a punk band. The punk ethic was still there – the triple album was released at the same price as a single LP – but it remains their most challenging record, mixing musical styles as diverse as jazz and dancehall. If The Clash were punk's Beatles, then 'Sandinista!' was their 'White Album'.

1982's 'Combat Rock', The Clash's final record with their classic line-up, was a much more straightforward affair and contained the hits 'Rock The Casbah' and 'Should I Stay Or Should I Go'. But from there it was downhill for the group who would never reform, despite many offers.

The Clash finally disbanded in 1986. Strummer embarked on a solo career that included the soundtrack to director Alex Cox's movie, *Walker*, in 1988, and acting roles in films including *Mystery Train*, the 1989 film by American director Jim Jarmusch. In the early-'90s he had a stint playing with **The Pogues**. With his most recent band, **The Mescaleros**, he toured right up to the month before his death.

Joe is survived by his wife Lucinda, two daughters and one stepdaughter.



Joe Strummer: threw away the rule book

PHOTOGRAPHY: SHEILA ROCK

New Strummer album was under way

THIRD LP WITH THE MESCALEROS WAS PLANNED FOR SPRING

Joe Strummer was working on an album of brand new songs at the time of his death, *NME* can reveal.

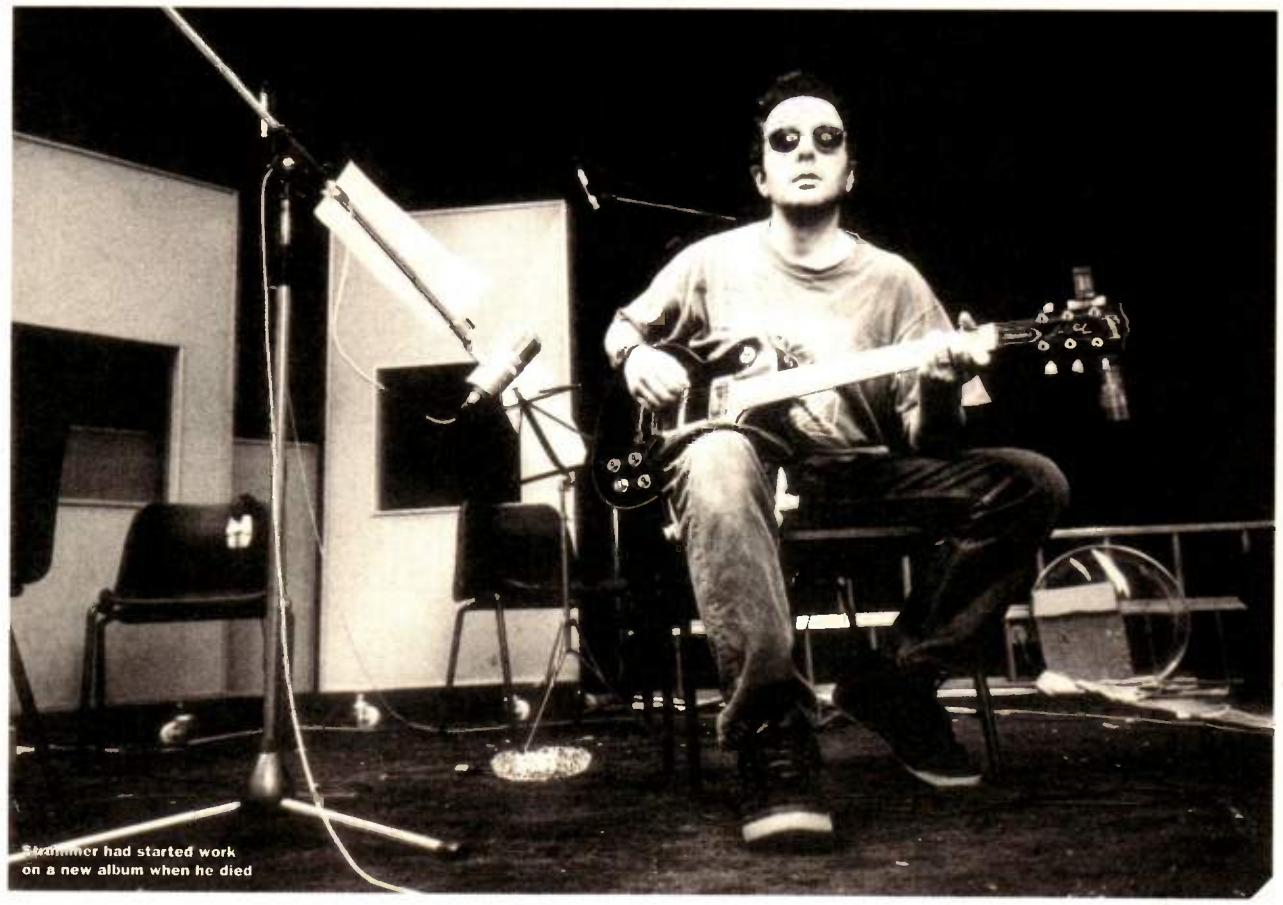
With his final band **The Mescaleros**, Strummer recorded and released two albums, 1999's 'Rock Art And The X-Ray Style' and 2001's 'Global A Go-Go'.

Strummer had been working on the follow-up in the months preceding his death. On their final club tour of the UK, Strummer and The Mescaleros had been performing a number of unreleased songs, with working titles including 'Get Down Moses', 'Guitar Slinger Man', 'Dakar Meantime' and 'Coma Girl' – the latter being singled out as one of the best. The group had also been performing a cover of The Stooges' '1969', and Strummer was scheduled to team up with **Bono** to record a new song for the forthcoming Nelson Mandela-organised AIDS Awareness concert in South Africa.

During December, Strummer and The Mescaleros were scheduled to go into a studio to do more work on a new album, currently untitled, which was tentatively scheduled for release this spring. However, it remains unclear how much progress was made and how many new songs were committed to tape in a releasable form.

On The Mescaleros' final tour, Strummer had been performing a number of unreleased songs

In the coming months, decisions will have to be made on what, if any, classic Clash or new Strummer material is released. Recent posthumous releases have come from **Ian Dury**, **George Harrison**, **Nirvana** and **Jeff Buckley**.



Strummer had started work on a new album when he died

Onstage at Acton Town Hall, Strummer's last London gig

PHOTOGRAPHY: TOM SHELHAN/STRUMMERSITE.COM/PA/LFI/HAYLEY MADDEN

Joe's last gig in London

The last time **Joe Strummer** played in his beloved London, it encapsulated everything he stood for – as both a musician and political activist.

At the tail-end of a successful UK tour with **The Mescaleros**, Strummer decided to play a gig at the most unlikely of venues – London's Acton Town Hall (November 15).

The venue was obscure, but the cause wasn't. Strummer picked up his instrument in aid of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). The firefighters are locked in a bitter pay dispute, and were undertaking a series of strikes in an attempt to increase their pay.

Performing after a moving speech by FBU leader Andy Gilchrist, who said he'd been a follower of **The Clash** since seeing them back in 1978 at an anti-racism gig, fans were not prepared for how the show would end.

For the first time in nearly 20 years, Strummer was joined onstage by former Clash guitarist **Mick Jones** for an impromptu run-through of some of their biggest hits – 'Bankrobber', 'White Riot' and 'London's Burning'.

At the time fans told *NME* it was like seeing The Clash during their prime.

"It was like being taken back to the '70s," one said. "There were speakers from the Fire Brigades Union, and the Clash songs sounded timeless. It was a remarkable moment in the most unremarkable place!"

The performance looks set to go down in history as Strummer's last, although that's not strictly true. The tour continued for another six nights, ending at Liverpool University on November 22.

After the Acton gig, persistent rumours that The Clash were planning to reform in the spring for a one-off performance when they were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in the US next March appeared to gain some credibility. Sadly, that event will now take on an altogether different meaning, with fans the world over left to reflect on what might have been.

THE LAST LONDON SET:

'Shaktar Donetsk'
'Bhindi Bhagee'
'Rudie Can't Fail'
'Tony Adams'
'(White Man) In Hammersmith Palais'
'Mega Bottle Ride'
'Get Down Moses'
'Police And Thieves'
'Cool'n'Out'
'Police On My Back'
'Johnny Appleseed'
'Coma Girl'
'I Fought the Law'
'Bankrobber'
'White Riot'
'London's Burning'

The last weeks of a rock legend

November 11: Strummer starts his final UK tour with The Mescaleros. The opening night of the Bringing It All Back Home Tour is at the Edinburgh Liquid Rooms.

November 15: Strummer grabs headlines performing a show in aid of the FBU at London Acton Town Hall. Clash guitarist Mick Jones joins him onstage for the first time in almost two decades. It is the closest the world will ever get to a reunion.

November 22: Joe Strummer plays his last ever show at Liverpool University.

The set combines new material with Clash classics.

December 5: Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros announce that they're going into the studio to work on their new album, tentatively scheduled for release in the spring.

December 22: Strummer dies peacefully

'He was my inspiration and my hero'

STARS PAY TRIBUTE TO THE CLASH FRONTMAN

Within hours of the news of Joe Strummer's passing, stars including **Bono**, **Nicky Wire** and the **Ramones** took time out to pay tribute.

Green Day's **Billie Joe Armstrong** played 'Bankrobber' on his official website, while others offered their condolences in a more traditional way. Below are a selection of the tributes to Strummer.

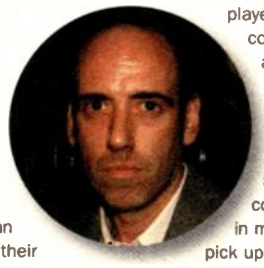
"The Clash were the greatest rock band. They wrote the rule book for U2. Though I was always too much of a fan to get to know him well, we were due to meet in January to finish our Nelson Mandela song with Dave Stewart. It's such a shock."
Bono

"Our friend and compadre is gone. God bless you, Joe."
Mick Jones, ex-The Clash

"I met The Clash in 1976. I was a young journalist on *NME* and they were an unsigned band. I did their first big interview for an *NME* cover story in early-1977. I thought they were the greatest band I had ever seen. And half a lifetime on, in a large part of my soul, I still do."
Tony Parsons

"We're shocked and saddened to hear of the sad loss, especially at this time of year."
Nicky Wire, Manic Street Preachers

"Joe was not just a great bloke, he was a great musician" **Glen Matlock**



"He was a brilliant lyricist and the electric focal point of the greatest live band of all time. He played as if the world could be changed by a three-minute song, and when I saw The Clash play, my world was changed forever. His idealism and conviction instilled in me the courage to pick up a guitar and the courage to try to make a difference. Joe Strummer was my greatest inspiration, my favourite singer of all time and my hero. I already miss him so much."
Tom Morello, Audioslave/ Rage Against The Machine

"The Clash were one of those bands who were so amazing and so wonderful that people are often tempted to take them for granted. But it's worth remembering that Joe and The Clash made music that was emotional and political and challenging and experimental and exciting and wonderful."
Moby

"They were unique because, here they are, breaking up at the peak of their popularity and having plenty of offers to come back, and not doing it. While other bands always come back for the money, they had a belief in what they were doing, and even though they could have used it, they never really cared about the money."
Johnny Ramone

"He was a big part of the whole punk movement."
Steve Jones, Sex Pistols

"Joe was not just a great bloke – he was also a great musician who wasn't afraid to take a chance and write lyrics that made a difference. His death is a very sad day for the music scene. Yet again it's one of the good guys who's died young."
Glen Matlock, Sex Pistols

"That heart of his always worked too hard. He's been making great music lately. I will really miss him."
Pete Townshend, The Who

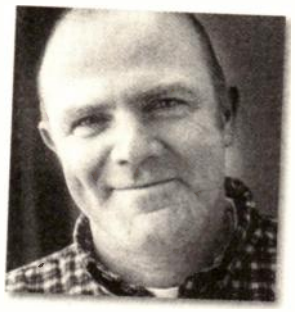
"He had a very gruff singing voice but there was lots of passion. The Clash played a crucial role in punk."
Pete Shelley, Buzzcocks

"I'm very, very sad at the news of Joe's death. I cannot pretend that we were that close but I am a great admirer of his songs and lyrics. The last time I saw Joe we were driving through Notting Hill at 60mph in his Hot Rod VW. I think that this says a lot about him and his spirit. My thoughts are with his family and friends."
Elvis Costello

"He was a clear contemporary, and we were rivals. I believed we had to get inside the pop culture. He believed you should always stay outside and hurl things at it. We had endless arguments about it. As we all got older I realised what a nice person he was."
Bob Geldof

Strummer's impact on one NME writer's life

Stuart Baillie was an NME writer in Joe Strummer's prime. Here, he recounts his experiences with Strummer, and explains the impact his life had on everyone who met him.



When I was a kid, I knew that when The Clash hit town, you had to miss school and spend the day getting educated by Joe Strummer. And happily, that's just what happened at the Ulster Hall, Belfast, 1978. We got inside the venue by noon, watched the band soundchecking bits of their second album, and afterwards we talked at length with Joe, Mick, Paul and Topper. They humoured our naïve stammerings, and coached us in the basics of revolution rock. It was the same deal after the show. We went home with immense reading lists, recommended tunes and inflammable one-liners from Joe.

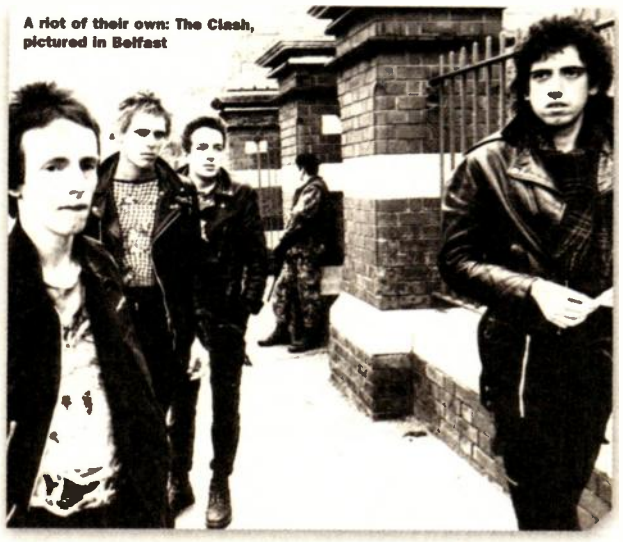
Of all the punk bands, The Clash seemed the most purposeful, the group most keen on sharing the ideal. We knew that Joe Strummer hated *Top Of The Pops*, which he regarded as a phoney institution. Otherwise, he'd try any method to carry the news. So he'd let fanzine writers sleep on his hotel floors and every city gave him the chance to good-vibe the new recruits, to let them escort his group around their town, encouraging them to start their own bands. He returned thousands of impressionable kids to their world with masses of fresh knowledge and confidence.

When I later became a music writer, I met Joe quite often, and he was always tremendous value. During one long, and ultimately drunken afternoon in his favourite Soho pub, we were joined by his bookie, his tailor and a series of other fine rogues. Joe was dressed entirely in black. He leaned back in his chair, lit up a series of Winston cigarettes and parked his engineer boots on the table. "Never take your boots off," he mused, like some battle-worn general. Which he was, really.

Joe lived his life like he was in the coolest movie. He always dressed the part, and he held the smartest poses, even when the cameras weren't around. Best of all though, was the way that he spoke. Slow and musical, drawling from the back of his throat like Marlon Brando or maybe Clint Eastwood. His style was surely coloured by Dylan's mid-'60s persona, when words were mangled to wonderfully poetic effect. And behind all those fragments was the freewheeling character of Jack Kerouac, whose beat literature was often hailed by Joe as a chief influence.

It wasn't always easy being such an open-hearted figure. For every nine fans that Joe would meet, there was always some guy with a sneering point to make. And of course it was easy to find inconsistencies in his left-wing schemes. The Clash were never dogmatic artists like, say, Crass or The Redskins. They didn't have all the answers. But nobody could convey the *romance* of revolution, could ring those persuasive chimes of freedom quite like Strummer.

We last met at a Mescaleros show in Belfast, 1999. An orderly line of us, waiting to go backstage afterwards, each of us with a variant on the same line. "You changed my life," we'd confess, and Joe would graciously accept the compliment, like he hadn't heard this a thousand times before. But we really meant it, and the man understood that this was true. *Adios* Joe, you lived a significant life.



A riot of their own: The Clash, pictured in Belfast

at his home in Broomfield, Somerset, aged just 50. Initial press reports say the cause of death is a "suspected heart attack".

December 23: A simple statement is issued on Strummer's official website, which reads: "Joe Strummer died yesterday. Our condolences to Luce and the kids, family and friends." Numerous tributes flood in from all over the world, from both fans and his musical peers.

December 24: An autopsy finds Joe Strummer died of a sudden cardiac arrest, as was suspected. It emerges the singer collapsed after walking his dog.

The UK press join in tribute to Strummer. *The Sun* call him "the voice of a generation", *The Independent* both "influential and radical". Even the traditionally conservative *Daily Mail* admits he shook "the very foundations of rock music".

December 30: Strummer is cremated at a private ceremony in west London. It is attended by his former bandmates, his close family, and friends such as Fatboy Slim and the actor Keith Allen. His coffin is adorned with a Stetson and stickers carrying the slogans 'Vinyl Rules' and 'Question Authority'.

UK TOP 40 SINGLES

THE OFFICIAL UKSINGLES CHART

1	1	SOUND OF THE UNDERGROUND	GIRLS ALOUD (POLYDOR)
3	2	CHEEKY GIRLS	CHEEKY SONG (MULTIPLY)
6	3	LOSE YOURSELF	EMINEM (INTERSCOPE)
2	4	SACRED TRUST/AFTER YOU'RE GONE	ONE TRUE VOICE (EBUL/JIVE)
4	5	SORRY SEEMS TO BE THE HARDEST WORD	BLUE FT ELTON JOHN (INNOCENT)
5	6	IF YOU'RE NOT THE ONE	DANIEL BEDINGFIELD (POLYDOR)
8	7	YOU'RE A SUPERSTAR	LOVE INC (NULIFE)
9	8	BUSTER DOI	AVRIL LAVIGNE (ARISTA)
7	9	THE KETCHUP SONG	LAS KETCHUP (ELEKTRA)
13	10	COLESSEUM	NELLY FT KELLY ROWLAND (UNIVERSAL)
12	11	PUPPY LOVE/SLEIGH RIDE	S CLUB JUNIORS (POLYDOR)
14	12	FAMILY PORTRAIT	PINK (ARISTA)
10	13	FEEL	ROBBIE WILLIAMS (EMI)
16	14	LAST GOODBYE/BE WITH YOU	ATOMIC KITTEN (INNOCENT)
11	15	WE'VE GOT TONIGHT	RONAN KEATING FT LULU (POLYDOR)
18	16	HOLDING ON FOR YOU	LIBERTY X (V2)
15	17	WHAT MY HEART WANTS TO SAY	GARETH GATES (S)
21	18	JENNY FROM THE BLOCK	JENNIFER LOPEZ (EPIC)
19	19	THUG LOVIN'	JA RULE FT BOBBY BROWN (DEF JAM)
24	20	NAUGHTY GIRL	HOLLY VALANCE (LONDON)
22	21	HEAVEN	DJ SAMMY & YANOU FT DO (DATA/MOS)
20	22	UNITED STATES OF WHATEVER	LIAM LYNCH (GLOBAL WARMING)
17	23	SCORPIO RISING	DEATH IN VEGAS/LIAM GALLAGHER (CONCRETE)
25	24	WU FLOW BIG BROVAZ (EPIC)	
26	25	I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW	PASCAL FT KAREN PARRY (ALL AROUND THE WORLD)
33	26	RUBIES DARIUS (MERCURY)	
29	27	STRONGER/ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES	SUGABABES (ISLAND)
–	28	REACT	ERICK SERMON FT REDMAN (J)
37	29	ALIVE	S CLUB (POLYDOR)
30	30	LIKE I LOVE YOU	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE (JIVE)
32	31	DON'T LET ME DOWN/YOU AND I	WILL YOUNG (S)
34	32	DIE ANOTHER DAY	MADONNA (WARNER BROS)
–	33	LAND OF THE LIVING	MILK INC (POSITIVA)
36	34	LOVE ON THE LINE	BLAZIN' SQUAD (EAST WEST)
31	35	I'M GONNA BITCHA GOOD	SHANIA TWAIN (MERCURY)
39	36	PUT HIM OUT	MS DYNAMITE (POLYDOR)
32	37	IT'S A RAINBOW	RAINBOW (GEORGE AND ZIPPY) (BBC MUSIC)
27	38	NOTHING SACRED – A SONG FOR KIRSTY	RUSSELL WATSON (DECCA)
–	39	DREAMER	CK & SUPREME DREAM TEAM (MULTIPLY)
35	40	MAYTHE ENRIQUE IGLESIAS (INTERSCOPE)	

UK TOP 40 ALBUMS

THE OFFICIAL UKALBUMS CHART

7	1	LET GO	AVRIL LAVIGNE (ARISTA)
1	2	GEOGRAPHY	ROBBIE WILLIAMS (EMI)
5	3	MESSUNDAZTOOD	PINK (ARISTA)
2	4	ONE LOVE BLUE (INNOCENT)	
10	5	BY THE WAY RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS (WARNER BROS)	
9	6	A RUSH OF BLOOD TO THE HEAD	COLDPLAY (PARLOPHONE)
4	7	UNBREAKABLE – THE GREATEST HITS – VOL 1	WESTLIFE (S)
3	8	THE GREATEST HITS 1970-2002	ELTON JOHN (MERCURY)
6	9	A NEW DAY AT MIDNIGHT	DAVID GRAY (EAST WEST)
–	10	WHITE LADDER	DAVID GRAY (EAST WEST)
19	11	ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES	SUGABABES (ISLAND)
13	12	FEELS SO GOOD	ATOMIC KITTEN (INNOCENT)
18	13	THIS IS ME THEN	JENNIFER LOPEZ (EPIC)
12	14	ESCAPE	ENRIQUE IGLESIAS (INTERSCOPE)
8	15	ELV1S – 30 NUMBER 1 HITS	ELVIS (RCA)
16	16	GOTTA GET THROUGH THIS	DANIEL BEDINGFIELD (POLYDOR)
–	17	ALL RISE	BLUE (INNOCENT)
28	18	THE EMINEM SHOW	EMINEM (INTERSCOPE)
20	19	GIVE IN	DARIUS (MERCURY)
30	20	NIRVANA	NIRVANA (GEFFEN)
22	21	COME AWAY WITH ME	NORAH JONES (PARLOPHONE)
11	22	FORTY LICKS	ROLLING STONES (VIRGIN/DECCA)
34	23	THINKING IT OVER LIBERTY X (V2)	
48	24	ONE BY ONE FOO FIGHTERS (RCA)	
26	25	FROM NOW ON	WILL YOUNG (S)
47	26	NELLYVILLE NELLY (UNIVERSAL)	
–	27	NOT THAT KIND ANASTACIA (EPIC)	
41	28	FOREVER DELAYED – THE GREATEST HITS	MANIC STREET PREACHERS (EPIC)
38	29	THE BEST OF 1990-2000 & B-SIDES	U2 (ISLAND)
24	30	WHAT MY HEART WANTS TO SAY	GARETH GATES (S)
36	31	TOGETHER S CLUB JUNIORS (POLYDOR)	
15	32	DESTINATION	RONAN KEATING (POLYDOR)
21	33	IT HAD TO BE YOU – THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK	ROD STEWART (J)
–	34	SMALL WORLD BIG BAND	JOOLS HOLLAND (WSM)
–	35	STRIPPED CHRISTINA AGUILERA (RCA)	
14	36	UP SHANIA TWAIN (MERCURY)	
–	37	JUSTIFIED	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE (JIVE)
–	38	WORLD OF OUR OWN	WESTLIFE (RCA)
27	39	MORE FRIENDS – SMALL WORLD BIG BAND 2	JOOLS HOLLAND (WSM)
32	40	BEST OF BOWIE	DAVID BOWIE (EMI)

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VIRGIN LOVES

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The Coral

The Music
The Music

Richard Ashcroft
Human Conditions

The Datsuns
The Datsuns

The Vines
Highly Evolved

Supergrass
Life On Other Planets

Foo Fighters
One By One

Queens Of The Stone Age
Songs For The Deaf

The Flaming Lips
Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots

NEW MUSIC

The Streets
Original Pirate Material

Feeder
Comfort In Sound

The Libertines
Up The Bracket

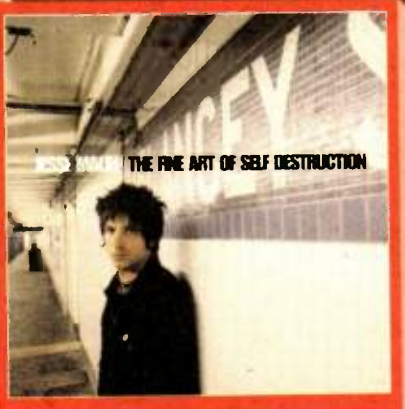
Radio 4
Gotham! £9.99

The Polyphonic Spree
Beginning Stages Of...

The Sights
Got What We Want

The White Stripes
White Blood Cells

JJ72
I To Sky



Jesse Malin
The Fine Art Of Self Destruction

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Stars join 'West Memphis Three' campaign

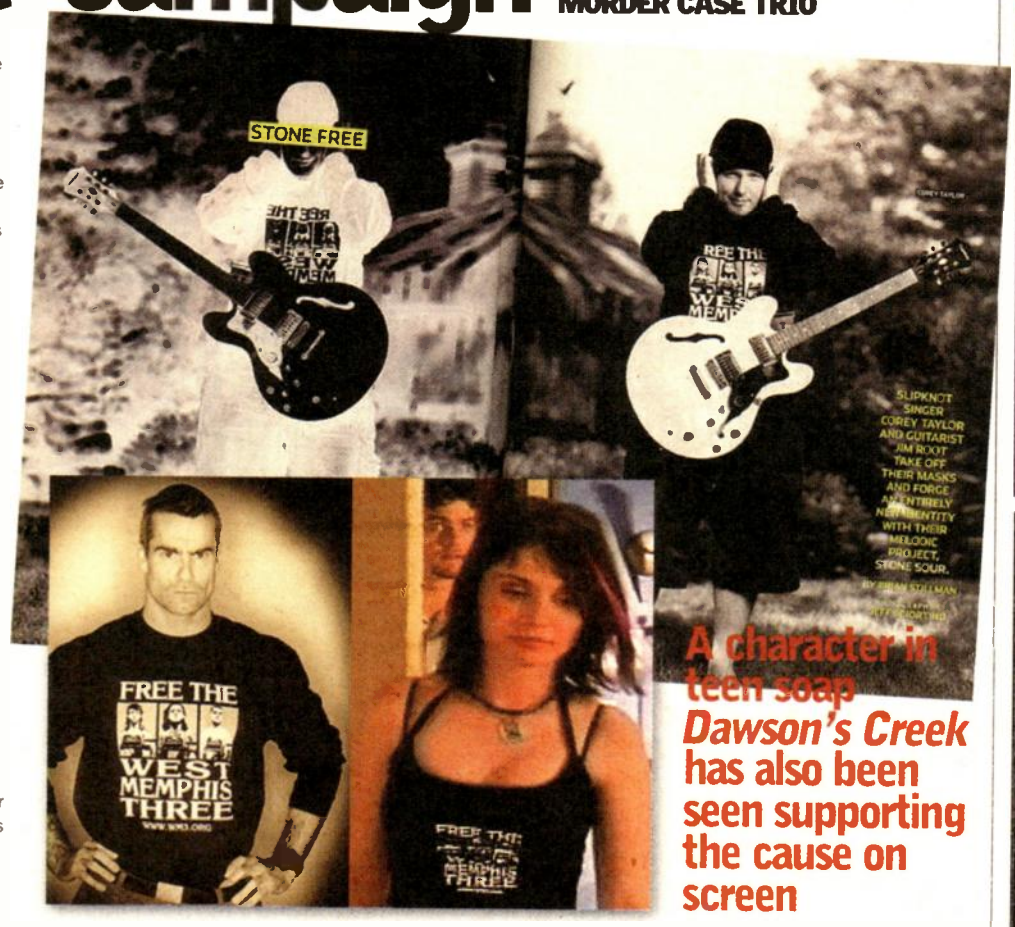
T-SHIRTS HELP RAISE AWARENESS OF MURDER CASE TRIO

T-shirts campaigning for the release of the West Memphis Three are becoming the must-wear fashion item for 2003, with stars including **Slipknot** promoting the cause and highbrow fashion magazines highlighting the shirts in their pages.

Former Black Flag star **Henry Rollins** has spearheaded the recent campaign to free the trio of men convicted for the 1993 murder of three children, which they deny committing. A recent benefit album, 'Rise Above', featured the likes of **Ryan Adams**, **Iggy Pop**, Slipknot's **Corey Taylor** and **Chuck D**.

Special T-shirts have been produced, featuring a 'Free The West Memphis Three' logo. Slipknot's Corey Taylor was recently photographed wearing one, and a recent issue of *The Face* magazine carried the top in its fashion section.

Eddie Vedder has frequently spoken out on the three's behalf and worn a T-shirt supporting their cause at numerous **Pearl Jam** live shows, while a character in teen soap *Dawson's Creek* has also been seen supporting the cause on screen, donning a vest top with the campaign's logo.


STONE FREE
FREE THE WEST MEMPHIS THREE
SLIPKNOT SINGER COREY TAYLOR AND GUITARIST JIM ROOT TAKE OFF THEIR MASKS AND FORCE AN ENTIRELY NEW IDENTITY WITH THEIR MELODIC PROJECT, STONE SOUR.

A character in teen soap *Dawson's Creek* has also been seen supporting the cause on screen

WHO ARE THE WM3?

On May 5 1993, the naked bodies of three eight-year-old boys were found in a shallow creek in West Memphis, Arkansas. Their feet and hands were bound 'hog-style' with their shoelaces. They had been savagely assaulted and one had been sexually mutilated.

The local community immediately went looking for someone to blame. They found three outsider metalhead teenagers, one of whom had an interest in occultism and had had minor run-ins with the law. The killings were ritualistic, said the community, claiming the three metal boys were satanic.

The trio, Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelly, were charged with the murders. Misskelly, a 17-year-old with an IQ of 72, made a confession to police. The confession, which was riddled with inaccuracies and made in the final 45 minutes of a 12-hour interrogation, was never recorded and Misskelly quickly withdrew it.

Nevertheless, it was used as the basis for his conviction and then for those of Baldwin and Echols who were tried separately. No physical evidence was ever presented. The jury were told that the three were taking part in a satanic ritual and that the children had been sacrificed in a virtual worship of evil.

Baldwin, then 17, and Misskelly were sentenced to life without parole. Echols was sentenced to death. He remains on death row.

Vote Ms Dynamite

Ms Dynamite: says politicians don't listen to young people

Ms Dynamite has said she would love to get into politics, claiming: "You might see Ms Dynamite as a politician soon."

Speaking on BBC's *Newsnight* current affairs programme, she said: "I've got a responsibility I feel to young people, but that's my only responsibility."

The 21-year-old Mercury Music Prize and treble-MOBO winner said: "The connotations that come with the word 'politics' – to me as a young person — are... basically middle-class, rich, white men that don't give a damn about what we're going to think. And I don't mean that as in 'we' as a black person, I mean that as 'we' as young people.

"If you said to young people, on the other hand, are you interested in the way in which the world is run? Are you interested in this particular thing about education or this about the NHS or this about whatever, they'll tell you 'Yes'. I think young people are very, very interested in the way that the world is run."

Asked why politicians are failing to engage young people, she said: "They don't really listen to young people. They don't actually listen to how we're affected every day, and even if they do, they don't really stick their neck out to do anything about it."

PHOTOGRAPHY: RETNA

'Exhausted' Vines start work on new LP

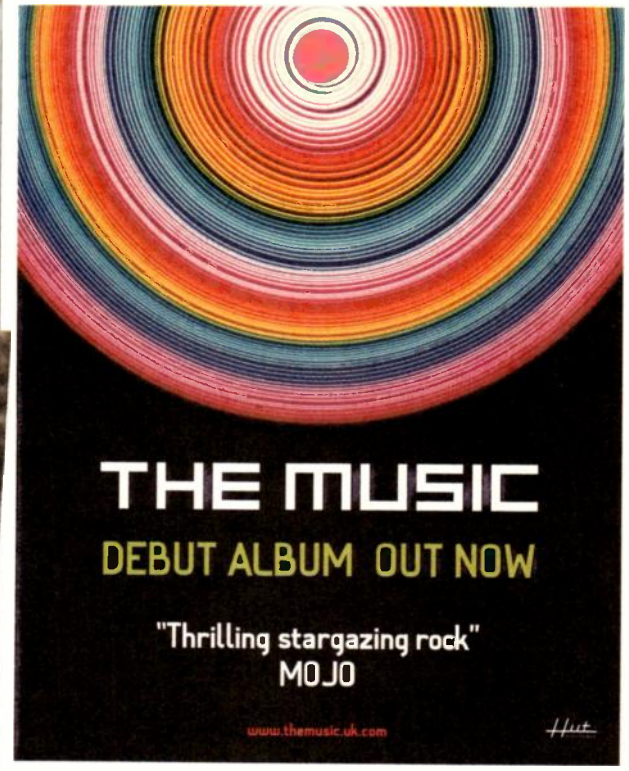
The Vines have started work on their second album while taking a break from touring.

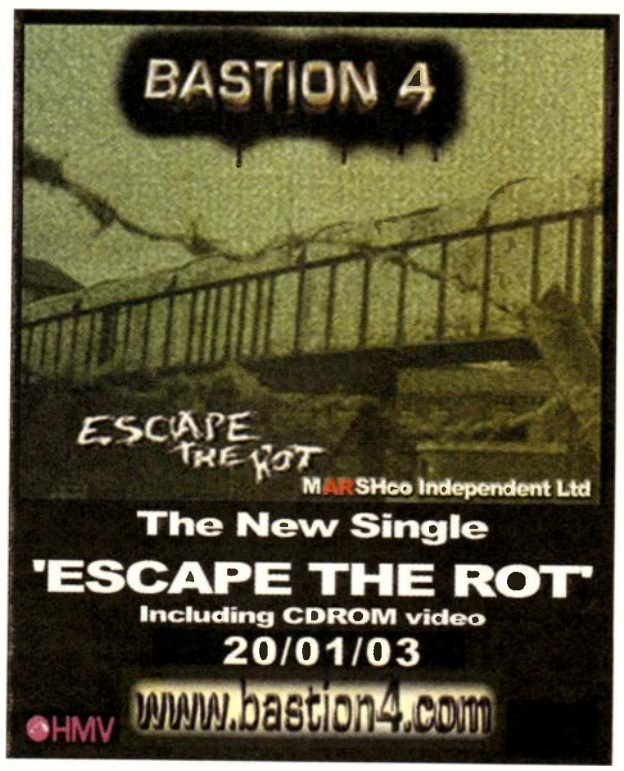
As reported last week, the Australian rockers pulled out of their scheduled *NME* Awards show at the London Astoria (February 12) suffering from exhaustion. Things came to a head in the US late last year, with **Craig Nicholls** and bassist **Patrick Mathews** fighting onstage during a show in Boston.

A statement issued to the Australian music website *www.undercover.com.au* reads: "Three members of the band are currently shacked up together at a residence in an undisclosed neighbourhood in Sydney. They're quietly kicking back before heading into a Sydney studio to commence recording of the follow-up to the critically acclaimed 'Highly Evolved' album."

Up to four new songs are expected to be played at the Big Day Out touring festival later this month. The band are also planning headline shows in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney at the end of the month.

The Vines: heading into the studio in Sydney





Big names line up for 2003 summer festivals

RADIOHEAD, PRINCE AND JAY-Z LIKELY CONTENDERS FOR PRIME HEADLINE SLOTS

Big names are already being booked for the summer festivals, with news leaking on line-ups for the Glastonbury, V and Reading/Leeds events.

As ever, Glastonbury's line-up is attracting speculation; this year organisers may break with their tradition of keeping it secret and announce the bill when tickets go on sale in March.

As long as the festival's licence appeal is successful, **REM** will headline on the first night (June 27). Festival sources have told *NME* that a "special guest" will play just before the American rockers, although rumours **David Gray** will appear are unconfirmed.

Radiohead are a good bet for the following evening, with their album due in June and the band looking for a huge comeback show. The Sunday headline slot is strongly rumoured to be **Prince**. Michael Eavis usually ends the festival with a veteran or rock legend – last year Rod Stewart played the final headline slot, and in 2000 it was David Bowie.

Prince rumoured to play final night at Glastonbury

Other clues to the bill come from last year's Pilton Party, a small event organised by Michael Eavis. **Idlewild** played at the show, and are likely to be Second Stage headliners or high up on the Main Stage. **Suede**, who are planning the release of a 'Greatest Hits' in 2003, could also return to Glastonbury – a festival they played at their prime in 1993. **Craig David** has also been mentioned in connection with an appearance.

Metallica are already confirmed for this summer's Reading and Leeds festivals, with **Jay-Z**, **Linkin Park**, **The Vines**, **Audioslave** and **System Of A Down** also likely to play.

Sources close to the V2003 festival have told *NME* that the **Foo Fighters**, **Red Hot Chili Peppers**, **The White Stripes** and **Coldplay** are on their wish list for this year, while Scotland's T In The Park – celebrating its tenth birthday – will see a headline appearance from REM, with Foo Fighters and **Travis** also mooted.

Final announcements on line-ups are expected in the spring.

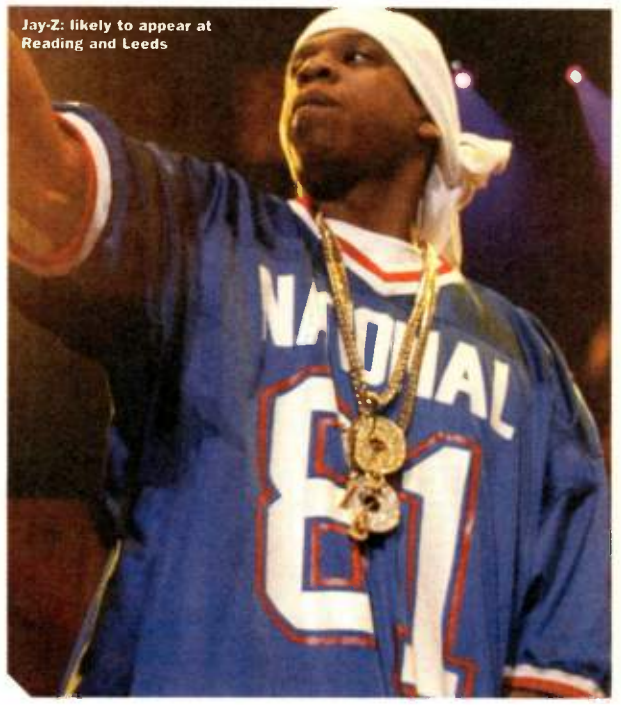
Glasto bound: Radiohead may headline one night, and REM (right) will play another

Where? Glastonbury
When? June 27-29
Who's likely to play? REM, David Gray, Idlewild, Radiohead, Dolly Parton, Jimmy Cliff, The Coral, The Libertines, Starsailor, Craig David, Massive Attack, The Streets, The White Stripes, Super Furry Animals, Elbow, Richard Ashcroft, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, Muse, Supergrass, The Flaming Lips, Prince

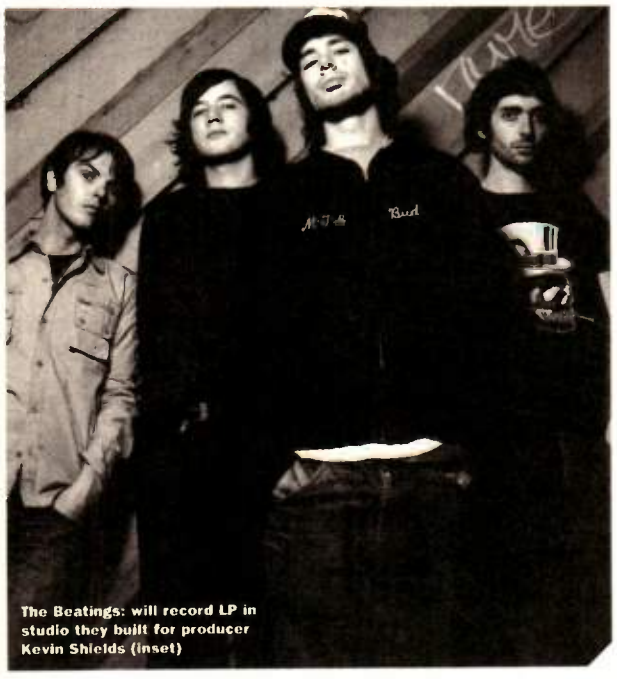
Where? Reading/Leeds
When? Traditionally August Bank Holiday Weekend, 22-25
Who's likely to play? Linkin Park, Jay-Z, System Of A Down, Audioslave, Metallica, Nickelback, Limp Bizkit, The Vines, The Music, Glassjaw, The White Stripes, Jet, Idlewild, The Basement, The Sights, My Morning Jacket, The Mars Volta, BRMC, JJ72, The Flaming Lips

Where? T In The Park
When? July 12-13
Who's likely to play? REM, Coldplay, Travis, Foo Fighters, Idlewild

Where? V2003
When? Slated for August 16-17
Who's likely to play? Foo Fighters, Coldplay, David Gray, Feeder, Red Hot Chili Peppers, The White Stripes


Jay-Z: likely to appear at Reading and Leeds

Beatings get Primal dream producer


The Beatings: will record LP in studio they built for producer Kevin Shields (inset)

The Beatings have persuaded ex-**My Bloody Valentine** frontman **Kevin Shields** to produce their new album – in return for them building him a studio!

Before becoming an integral force in the new rock revolution, Beatings singer **Nick Pankhurst** worked as a handyman and builder. He struck up a friendship with Shields, now a semi-permanent member of **Primal Scream**, last year.

"The drummer and me built Kevin's studio for him," Nick told *NME*. "We're going to record the album in the studio that we built."

Nick, who is a huge MBV and Primal Scream fan, said he was starstruck when he first met Shields.

"It got to a point where I now know him," he said. "But for the first couple of months I couldn't really deal with it."

The Beatings played a show at the London Garage on New Year's Eve – with a set of cover versions picked by readers of *NME.COM* and the band's website, *www.thebeatings.co.uk*.

NME.COM readers asked the group to cover either the Ramones' 'Beat On The Brat' or Ian Dury & The Blockheads' 'Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick'.

"I was a bass player in a band that used to cover *(Ian Dury)* a long time ago," said Nick. "I used to hate it. Later on I got into Ian Dury, he's kinda cool. But I still think that song is stupid!"

The Beatings play the opening night of the *NME* Awards Tour at Dublin's Ambassador Theatre (January 24), as **The Polyphonic Spree** will not be appearing. They also play an *NME* Awards Show with **Idlewild** at the London Astoria (February 8).

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDY FALLON/STEVE DOUBLE/WIRE IMAGE/RETNA

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Eminem: 'I'm too big'

MATHERS ADMITS HIS SUCCESS MAY BACKFIRE AMID 8 MILE HYPE

On the eve of the UK release of his debut movie *8 Mile*, **Eminem** has revealed that he worries he's getting "too big for my own good".

The rapper's profile in 2002 couldn't have been higher, with his album 'The Eminem Show' topping critics' polls, as well as becoming the biggest-selling album of the year in the US.

"It's almost to the point where I truly believe I may be getting too big for my own good," he said. "And I never really asked for that."

The hugely anticipated *8 Mile* is released in the UK on January 17. Well received in the US, some commentators are tipping Eminem for Oscar glory. But it's not all film work in 2003. He is also strongly rumoured to be coming to the UK in the summer for gigs, with a massive outdoor show likely at the Milton Keynes Bowl.

"I never really stop to look back on things... I'm concentrating on next year"

In total, Eminem has sold 19 million albums. His 1999 debut 'The Slim Shady LP' is certified quadruple platinum, while 'The Marshall Mathers LP' is certified eight times platinum, according to the Recording Industry Association of America.

In addition, the soundtrack to *8 Mile* is the best-selling soundtrack of the year in his native land.

However, in a rare interview with his local *Detroit Free Press* newspaper, Eminem claimed his current massive success could be bad for him in the long term.

"Looking back at this year? I really haven't thought about it," he said. "I never really stop to look back on things and reflect on them. I'm concentrating on next year."

For more on *8 Mile*, see next week's *NME*, out January 15.

PHOTOGRAPHY: BIG PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

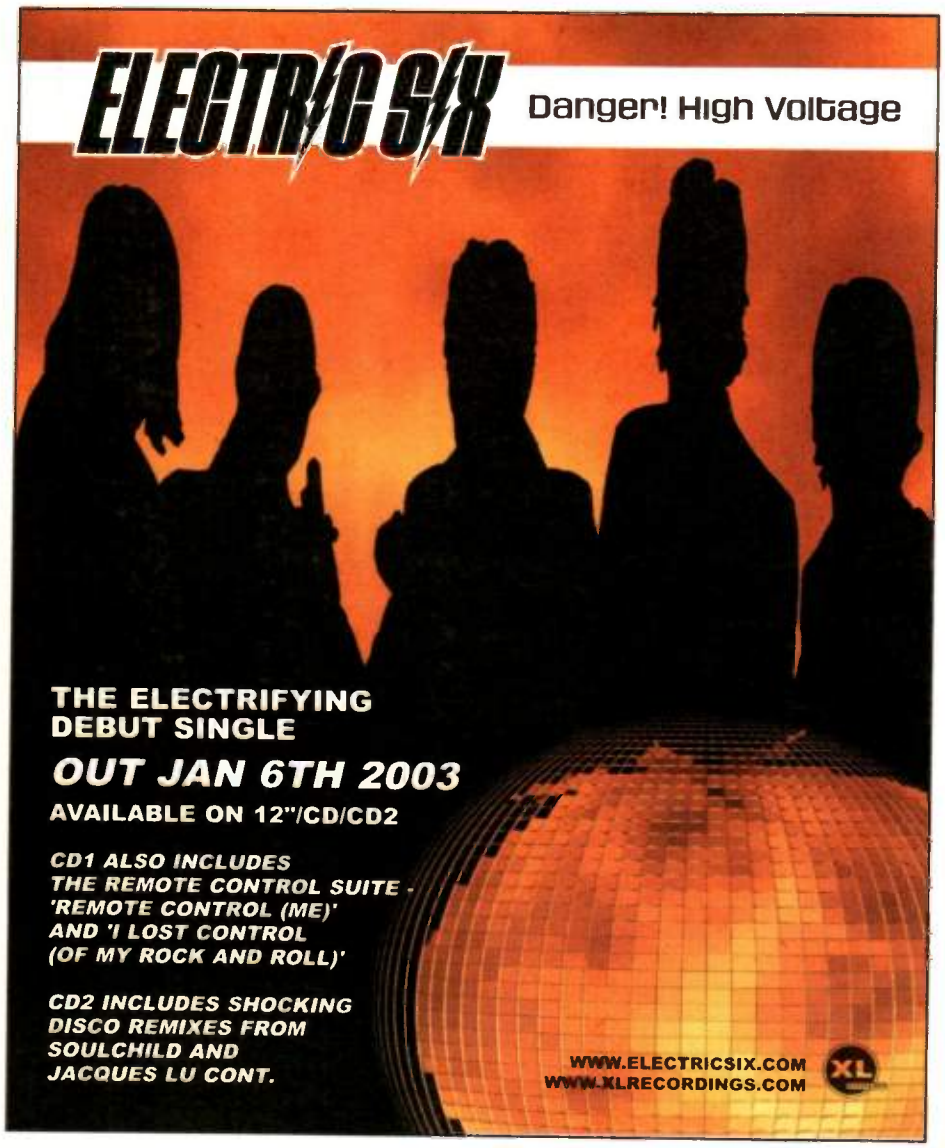
Chilis bassist Flea: ho ho ho indeed

Blood Santa Sex Magik!

Red Hot Chilli Peppers gave an early Christmas present to fans last month by playing a rare American show.

Bassist **Flea** dressed up as Santa as the Chilis played a one-off gig headlining the US Snowboard Grand Prix in Park City, Utah (December 20). The gig was one of only a handful of US dates in 2002, although they will tour again next summer.

The Chili Peppers return to Europe in the spring, playing a series of sold-out UK dates throughout March. They are also tipped to play at this year's festivals, with V2003 and Reading/Leeds the most likely candidates.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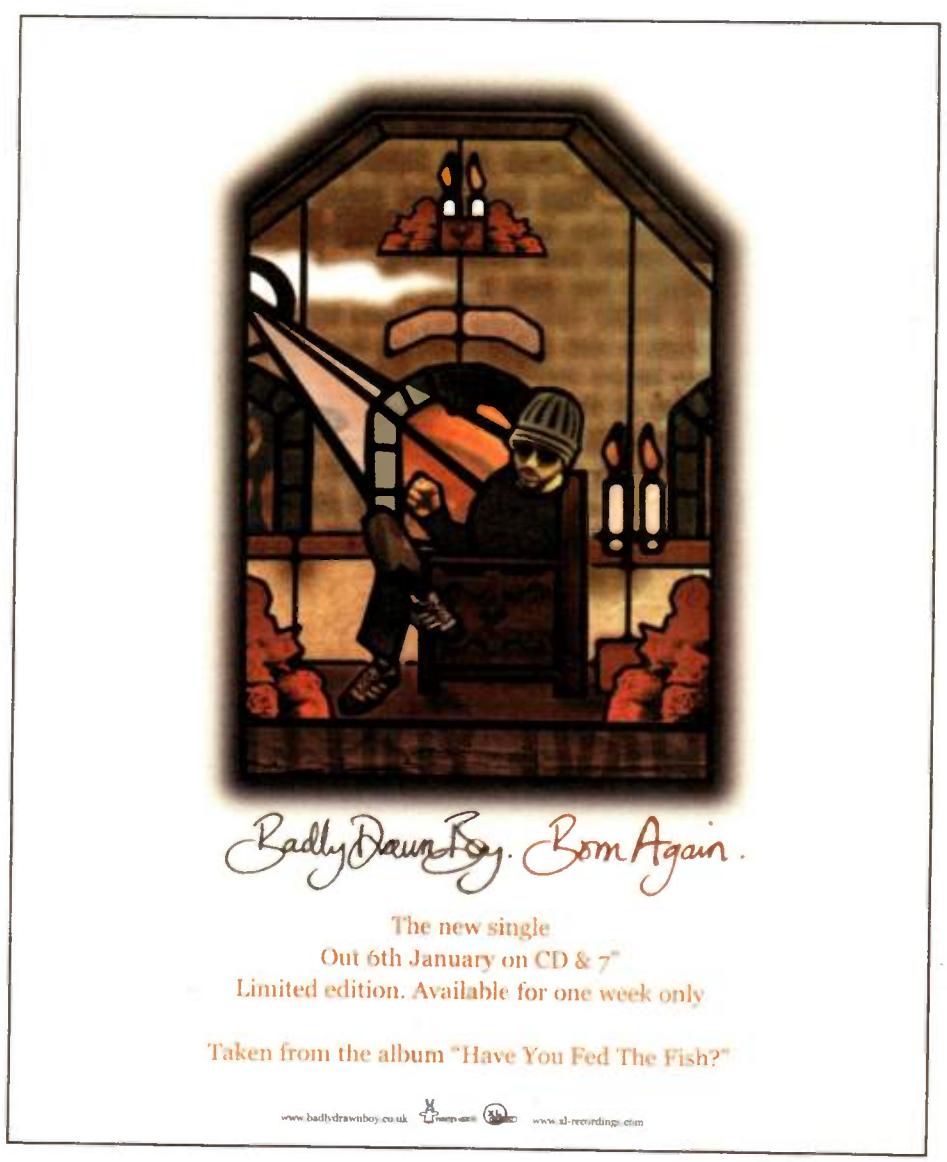
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www.badlydrawnboy.co.uk
www.xl-recordings.com

Coopers' super sexy new sound

COOPER TEMPLE CLAUSE'S HEAVIER, MORE ELECTRONIC MATERIAL TO BE UNVEILED AT NME SHOW

The Cooper Temple Clause have demoed an album's worth of new songs, and producer **Rick Rubin** is interested in working with the band.

Just before Christmas, the Coopers invited *NME* down to their self-built studio on a farm outside Reading, where we heard a selection of tracks from the follow-up to 'See This Through And Leave'. Due in May, 'The Album', as it is currently known, is being edited down from hours of band jams. The end result of the editing is a sound reminiscent of DJ Shadow or UNKLE, rather their guitar-heavy debut.

"The whole idea was to make a big step away from what we did on the last album, and it is. We've got 15 or 16 tracks done, we're starting on the masters now," guitarist **Dan Fisher** said.

"We're definitely enjoying it," singer **Ben Gautrey** remarked. "It's good to do something on our own terms. Any time on the first album where we might have had a hint of like, 'Can we get away with this?', on this album we've just gone and done it."

Fisher continued: "Rick Rubin was interested, but at the minute we're not sure how far that will go. Someone from his camp came over and we met them. That's not the kind of thing you rule out quickly!"

If the relationship with Rubin – who has worked with Red Hot Chili Peppers, Beastie Boys and Audioslave – does work out, TCTC plan to decamp to the US to mix the album.

Although the band were unwilling to disclose any new song titles, *NME* snooped around the studio and discovered that all the new songs are obsessed with sex!

Working titles include 'Sex Jam', 'Sex Toys', 'After Sex', 'Minging Sex', 'Sexyman', 'Garage Sex', 'Sex Castle', 'Tom Is Sex', 'Sex 2 Sex' and 'Fairy Sex'. Gautrey claimed drummer **Jon Harper** is giving the tracks joke titles to pass the time in the studio. "It won't end up on the record like that!" a studio source joked.

The Cooper Temple Clause play an *NME* Carling Awards Show at the London Astoria on February 6. They intend to perform some of the new songs to gauge the audience's reaction.

Working titles include 'Minging Sex', 'Fairy Sex' and 'Tom Is Sex'

Sex mad: Coopers singer Ben Gautrey; inset, those song titles in full

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDY WILLSHER

NEW BAND NEWS

Fall under The Warlocks' spell: their debut single is out soon

Velvet Underground-a-like slacker-rockers **The Warlocks** have released details of their debut British single. Double A-side 'Hurricane Heart Attack'/'Cosmic Let Down' will get a limited vinyl-only release on January 27 via City Rockers... ● Another of the new rock revolution's new wave, **The Hiss** have announced details of their British debut. Released through Loog Records on February 17, lead track 'Triumph' is backed by 'Street Research' and 'Back On The Radio' – hulking slices of rock'n'roll the lot of them. Go to *www.thehiss.com* for more... ● Neptunes-sponsored hip-hop duo **Clipse** follow-up the brilliantly back-to-basics underground anthem 'Grindin'' with new single 'When The Last Time' on February 3. The album 'Lord Willin'' follows a fortnight later, both are released via Arista... ● New Danish pop-soul duo **Junior Senior** sound like Wham!, The Hives, Michael Jackson, Madonna – in short a musical cut'n'shut of every great pop act... ever. They're playing London's Metro on January 23 and will release their debut single, the fantastic 'Move Your Feet', on February 24... ● And finally, a word on the much talked about Sunderland-based, teenage four-piece **The Futureheads**. Their spiky guitar-pop has been tipped by many to break through in 2003. They play the London Camden Monarch this week, January 9. Hope to see you down the front...

WHAT'S ON THE NME STEREO?

Good Time Women
Watcha Gonna Do (Demo)
They've got big hair, they live in a van by New York's East River and seemingly take their song titles from Hulk Hogan's catchphrases circa 1989. *NME* loves Good Time Women.

The Warlocks
Hurricane Heart Attack/ Cosmic Let Down (City Rockers)
First UK release from sublime slacker-goth LA six-piece.

The Libertines
Time For Heroes (Rough Trade)
New single from our favourite EastEnders and real-life Slater family – The Libertines. B-side titles include 'General Smuts' and 'Mr Finnegan'.

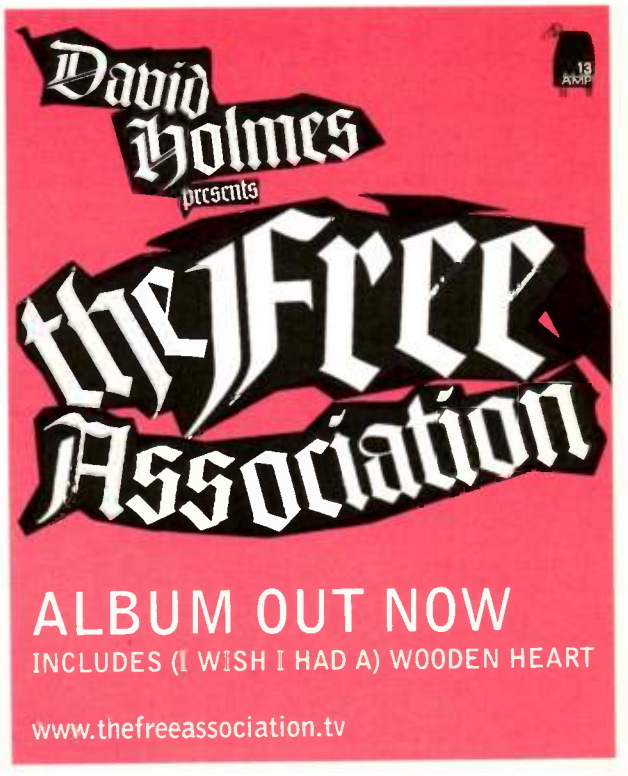
Miss Kittin
Radio Caroline (Mental Groove Records)
Electro past, present and future.

The Sleepy Jackson
UK Mini Album (Virgin)
Ace psychedelic pop. And yet more brilliance from the frontline of the Ayers rock revolution.

The Sights
Sorry Revisited (Sweet Nothing Records)
Released on March 3, this is the first single from the band's brilliant 'Got What We Want' LP.

Jet
Are You Gonna Be My Girl? (Demo)
Jet's finest moment thus far. Sounds mischievously like Iggy Pop's 'Lust For Life'.

The Go!Team
Ladyflash (Memphis Industries)
From the label's 'Estuary English' compilation, this is a sparkling collection of schizo-pop.



In the studio: two of 2003's hottest albums take shape

THE MARS VOLTA AND (RIGHT) STARSAILOR GEAR UP FOR THE SPRING RELEASE OF THEIR NEW LPS

Gunning for success: Cedric (left) and Omar

The Mars Volta, the group led by former **At The Drive-In** frontman **Cedric Bixler** and guitarist **Omar Rodriguez**, are preparing for the release of their debut LP, due out in April.

The Southern California-based outfit have been residing and recording the as-yet-untitled effort in über-producer **Rick Rubin**'s three-storey Los Angeles abode since early October.

"Living in a house and making a record is something we always dreamed about as kids," Rodriguez told *NME* when we joined the band in the studio. "We've usually only lived in places the size of this room. Just to have a whole piece of land to ourselves where no-one can come and bother us and we don't have to deal with the outside world is a pretty big part of making this record."

Though the two sometimes lock the gates (tourists often visit the mansion, once owned by the wife of escapologist Harry Houdini), one outsider welcome *chez* Volta is **Red Hot Chili Peppers**' **Flea**. The bassist, who recorded 'Bloodsugarsexmagik' there in the early-'90s, returned to the house to fill in on bass duties for TMV, who recently parted ways with **Eva Gardner**.

"She just didn't work out," Bixler said. "She's a great bass player but the personalities were conflicting."

"Flea played bass on the record," Rodriguez added. "He's a friend of ours and a fan of the music. He knew some of the songs already so it just seemed like the right thing to do at the time."

The material, which Bixler said they have been working on for two years, will form a "concept record" inspired by the life and untimely death by suicide of Julio Venegas, one of their friends from hometown El Paso, Texas.

"So, do you reckon we've got enough effects pedals?"

"There's not so much screaming any more" Cedric Bixler

"He was a really great artist and a really beautiful person," Bixler said. "There was a point *(in his life)* where he overdosed on morphine and we're taking that and kind of using when he was in the coma as the main basis for *(the songs)*. Like he goes into the coma and he takes these different adventures when he's under to different places. It's a bit like *Quantum Leap*... He led a very sad and hard life. He taught us all a lot and he's a shining example of what we are all about."

Venegas' Mexican heritage also creeps into the band's new sound, which is due to incorporate the piano stylings of **Larry Marlow**. Bixler said these new touches, as well as those by band members **Ikey Owens**, **Jon Philip Theodore** and **Jeremy Ward**, will leave ATD-I fans taking out their earplugs. "Our rhythm section is 100 per cent different than the one we were playing with in ATD-I. We've definitely made an attempt to draw on the influences we had in our bands previous to ATD-I and our drummer really helps us achieve that because he has that style. There's not so much screaming any more and there's not the obvious attempt to sound like Fugazi and Drive Like Jehu."

CURRENT SONG TITLES:

Roulette Dares
Inertiatic ESP
Take The Veil Cerpintaxt
Eriatarka
A Plague Upon Your Hissing Children
Televators

Watch out Beatles about: OK, it's James Walsh at Abbey Road. But The Beatles recorded here

Fab four: Starsailor, hard at work

"Do you reckon he's finished his vocals yet?"

Starsailor are winding up work on their second album in Abbey Road studios, where they have been recording with legendary producer **Phil Spector**.

NME joined the band during their ninth and final week in Abbey Road, a little after Spector's work had been completed.

"The greatest thing we've done so far was work with Phil," frontman **James Walsh** said. "I think we took a lot away from that. It was like two worlds colliding. He's not done much for a long time. He's learned a lot from us about how studios work these days and we learned from him about older techniques."

"He was amazing, had some mad ideas," added bassist **James Stelfox**.

It is not clear yet which of the four tracks produced by Spector will make the album. Starsailor have recorded 15 songs in total and intend to whittle them down to a lean ten. "We've done what we set out to do with Phil," said Walsh.

The album is now being co-produced by Starsailor and engineer Danton Supple.

"We're more aware of what arrangements we want, of what we want to do on this record," said Walsh, "and Danton is there to realise our vision."

The album, the follow-up to million-selling debut 'Love Is Here', was recorded in Abbey Road's studio two, the same room used by **The Beatles**. The rarefied air has seen Starsailor raise their game.

"One of the things we had about making the album was, rather than base it around three or four tracks, to make ten amazing songs and put them out," said Walsh.

"In simple terms, the difference between this album and the last is that on the last album we had a few great songs and a few alright ones, and went into the studio

"There's a new-found confidence – we know exactly what we want to do with this album"
James Walsh

cold, saying, 'These songs are alright, how can we make them really good?' In comparison, this time we said, 'These songs are really, really good, how can we make them fucking mindblowing?'"

Much of the album is informed by the recent birth of Walsh's baby daughter.

"We took a few weeks out completely during the summer," explained Stelfox. "We'd been on tour for two years, then James had Niamh and me and Ben *(Byrne, drums)* got hammered, went on holidays. I spoke to Jim at home and he said he'd written a load of new stuff on four-track. So we listened to them and thought, 'Fucking hell – these are strong.'"

"There's a new-found confidence with us," added Walsh. "We know exactly what we want to achieve with this album."

The band now move to a studio in north London owned by **Flood** – the producer best known for work with **U2**. After mixing is complete, the album should appear in May.

Working titles include 'Music Was Saved', though nothing has been decided. Before the album, there'll be a single in March. It could be the massive-sounding 'Four To The Floor', though 'Music Was Saved' is also a contender.

"We are delighted with it," said Walsh. "It's quite a step up from before."

STARSAILOR: WHAT TO EXPECT

Four To The Floor
A 'wall of sound' track that out-Spectors Spector, though ironically he didn't produce it. It contains a 24-piece string section and is a possible first single. The hardest and most driving Starsailor have ever sounded.

Telling Them
A song dealing with fatherhood. The closest to old-sounding Starsailor so far.

Music Was Saved
A track with just the band, no orchestra. Built around rolling drums and Hammond organ, with James' voice through a vocoder. Up and poppy. Another single in waiting.

Fidelity
Again, big and rangy with thunderous bass.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SEBASTIAN ARTZ/JAMES LOOKER

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Text: Hardeep Phull

1 BAUHAUS
Dark Entries
Johnny Walker: "Daniel Ash was such a great, innovative guitarist – he was considered the Jimi Hendrix of the whole goth rock movement."

2 JOHN LEE HOOKER
The Motor City Is Burning
"He's from Detroit so it's a really personal song and kind of a history lesson about the race riots there."

3 JOHN COLTRANE
A Love Supreme
"The way Coltrane plays three notes and does it in so many different ways is amazing. It's so melodic and deceptively simple sounding."

4 MC5
Black To Comm
"The band were part of the White Panther Party and this song fits in with their militant politics. It's a raw, angry call to arms with tons of energy and I guess you could say they had a little influence on the Soledad Brothers."

5 BRIAN ENO
Blank Frank
"I like Eno a little bit more with Roxy Music but as far as his solo stuff goes, this is as good as it gets. He takes the *(Bo)* Diddley beat and pushes it along further and adds his own spin on it. It personifies the idea of blues being a constantly evolving musical form instead of remaining static."

6 THE REVEREND ROBERT WILKINS
Prodigal Son Blues
"The Rolling Stones covered this song and credited it as being written by themselves, but it was actually written by The Reverend Robert Wilkins, probably before they were even born. It's a beautiful gospel song and a great story too."

7 UTFO
Roxanne, Roxanne
"I love a lot of early-'80s hip-hop and sometimes I try and imitate those scratches when I play the harmonica. It was so revolutionary at the time and all the kids in my neighbourhood were listening to it when it came out, but some of the rhymes sound a little cheesy now."

8 THELONIOUS MONK
Monk's Dream
"It's about as far out as you can get. All the guys who played with him always say that you had to concentrate so hard on what they were playing, otherwise they would get lost straight away."

9 THE DATSUNS
MF From Hell
"This is where I get a little contemporary. I always wanted to play guitar like Christian but I just am not physically capable. I saw them play live and I went nuts – they made me feel like a kid again."

10 THE DETROIT COBRAS
Shout Bama Lama
"It's a cover of an old Otis Redding song and Jack White played piano on the first recorded version *(on the 'Sympathetic Sounds Of Detroit' compilation)*. They're all really good friends of mine, and I still go and jam with them all the time."

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PHOTOGRAPHY: DEAN CHALKLEY

WWWHAT'S ON... NME.COM

JOE STRUMMER TRIBUTES

Leave your tributes and read the moving pieces left by fans for the punk rock legend on the special **NME.COM JOE STRUMMER TRIBUTES BOARD**. Following its appearance it became by far the busiest message board **NME.COM** has had in its history.
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PHOTOGRAPHY: PEROUINC.COM

BLING BLING

NME's top ten ringtones

1 (1) **United States Of Whatever** Liam Lynch (108580)
2 (3) **No One Knows** Queens Of The Stone Age (108409)
3 (2) **The Scientist** Coldplay (108320)
4 (4) **Science Of Silence** Richard Ashcroft (108685)
5 (5) **Getaway** The Music (108573)
6 (7) **Outtathaway** The Vines (108253)
7 (–) **Dreaming Of You** The Coral (108069)
8 (8) **Still Waiting** Sum 41 (108506)
9 (6) **I'm Sticking With You** Velvet Underground (108072)
10 (10) **Little By Little** Oasis (107830)

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NME RADIO

What's hot and what's not

The White Stripes do pretty good in the *NME* Radio playlist

YOUR TOP TEN

1 **Stop Crying Your Heart Out** Oasis
2 **Envy** Ash
3 **In Love** The Datsuns
4 **Obsessions** Suede
5 **Glass Slipper** Burning Brides
6 **Scorpio Rising** Death In Vegas
7 **All My Life** Foo Fighters
8 **Dead Leaves And The Dirty Ground** The White Stripes
9 **You're Pretty Good Looking** The White Stripes
10 **You Know You're Right** Nirvana

KICKED OFF

White America Eminem
Go Let It Out Oasis
Jailhouse The Beatings

JUST ADDED

Fortress Europe Asian Dub Foundation
U Know Y Mogwai
Hurricane Heart Attack The Warlocks

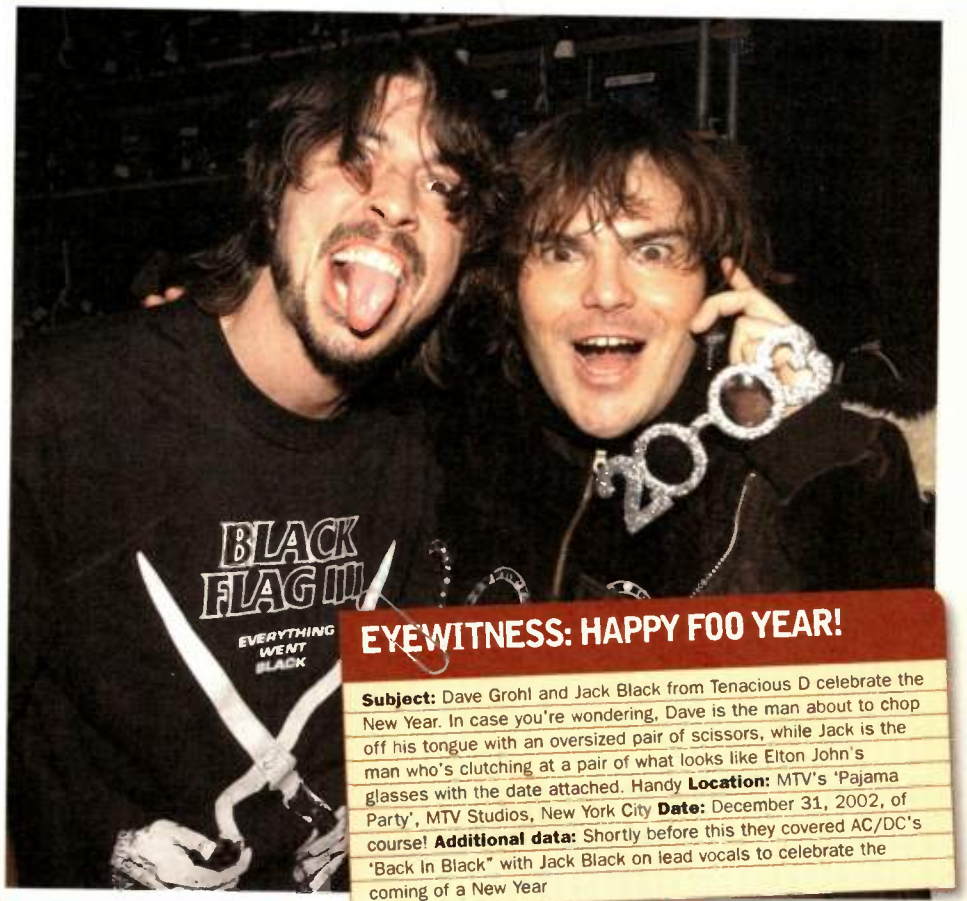
Listen to *NME* Radio at *www.nmeradio.com* and vote on the playlist

OASIS - NORTH AMERICA - AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2002

AUGUST 11 Philadelphia, PA Tower Theatre
AUGUST 12 Boston, MA Orpheum Theatre
AUGUST 13 New York, NY Radio City Music Hall
AUGUST 14 New York, NY Radio City Music Hall
AUGUST 16 Toronto, ONT. Molson Amphitheatre
AUGUST 17 Detroit, MI Pine Knob Music Theatre
AUGUST 19 Minneapolis, MN. State Theatre
AUGUST 20 Chicago, Ill Rosemont Horizon
AUGUST 21 Indianapolis, IN. Egyptian Room, Murat Theatre
AUGUST 24 Denver, CO. Auditorium Theatre
AUGUST 27 Vancouver, B.C. Orpheum Theatre
AUGUST 28 Seattle, WA. Paramount Theatre
AUGUST 29 Portland, ORE. Roseland
SEPTEMBER 1 San Francisco, CA Bill Graham Civic Auditorium
SEPTEMBER 2 Los Angeles, CA Greek Theatre
SEPTEMBER 3 Los Angeles, CA Greek Theatre
SEPTEMBER 5 Denver, CO. House Of Blues
SEPTEMBER 6 Dallas, TX Bronco Bowl
SEPTEMBER 8 Nashville, TN Amsouth Amphitheatre
SEPTEMBER 9 Fairfax, VA. Patriot Center
SEPTEMBER 10 Atlanta, GA Civic Center Theatre

EYEWITNESS: KELLY 'N' FELLA, AGAIN

Subject: Kelly Osbourne and Andrew WK. Or 'Bert McCracken, from The Used and of Kelly's Boyfriend fame', as he should correctly be known **Occasion:** Do the pair need a special occasion in order to lick each other's tongues/be sick into each other's mouths/realise they've both been caught in a bear trap? No, they do not **Well if you insist:** It was the KROQ Acoustic Christmas do **Location:** Universal Ampitheater, California **When:** December, 2002 **Time:** Precisely three sheets past the wind **Additional data:** Interesting picture in the background. Perhaps it's one of Fab Strokes' 'masterpieces'...



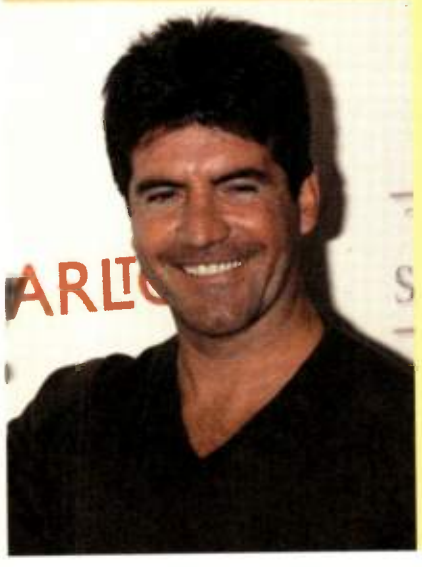
EYEWITNESS: HAPPY FOO YEAR!

Subject: Dave Grohl and Jack Black from Tenacious D celebrate the New Year. In case you're wondering, Dave is the man about to chop off his tongue with an oversized pair of scissors, while Jack is the man who's clutching at a pair of what looks like Elton John's glasses with the date attached. Handy **Location:** MTV's 'Pajama Party', MTV Studios, New York City **Date:** December 31, 2002, of course! **Additional data:** Shortly before this they covered AC/DC's 'Back In Black" with Jack Black on lead vocals to celebrate the coming of a New Year

YOUR NEXT THREE MONTHS IN GOSSIP...

JANUARY

The entire population of south London is expected at the wedding of **MC Harvey** with his **Mis-Teeq** boo **Alesha**; the other Mis-Teeq girls are rumoured to by marrying (their partners, not each other) on the same day... ● London gets a new club and a massive launch do as Powerhaus, a 900-capacity New York warehouse style venue, opens... ● Auditions are scheduled to begin for ***Pop Idol 2***, and it's a good month for **Simon Cowell** *(below)* as Spearmint Rhino are opening a new venue, right opposite the MI6 building...



FEBRUARY

The *NME* Carling Awards take place on **Robbie Williams'** birthday and the entire new rock revolution appears under one roof for the very first time... ● Get the police on standby: **Johnny Knoxville** is due in the UK at the same time as **Marilyn Manson**, promoting a film and an album respectively...● **The Cooper Temple Clause** are not expected to attend the World Hairdressing Congress at Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane... ● **The Coral** open their UK tour in Glasgow. We predict much celeb guestlist action on this tour... ● **J.Lo** and **B.Aff** *(right)* get married on Valentine's Day in Puerto Rico. **P Diddy's** already working on a new frock... ● **Rachel S Club** and **Kurt from *Hollyoaks*** are also tying the knot... ● Indie people won't win much at the **Brit Awards**... ● And it's good news for **Courtney Love**: Pipe Smoker Of The Year is announced this month...

MARCH

Another wedding, this time that of **Liam Gallagher** and **Nicole Appleton** *(below)*. This is *the* golden ticket of 2003... ● What's left of **The Clash** and **AC/DC** will be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame... ● **Fischerspooner** are back in the UK for a postponed gig, competing with the launch of *Zorro: The Musical*... ● Many people will take drugs at the **Miami Winter Music Conference**... ● It's the Re:creation Awards, with judges including **Badly Drawn Boy** and **Ronnie Wood**, celebrating 'young creative talent' at the V&A... ● And something for fans of **Moby** – it's World Book Day on the sixth...

FESTIVE GOSSIP HANGOVER ROUND-UP

Our festive visit to **The Cooper Temple Clause**'s studio found the band dressed in strictly-themed seasonal gear. Not unusual – it was their weekly 'Dress Up Thursday' and the theme of the week was Christmas. They assured *NME* this tradition would continue well into the year – so we're going back, and next time we'll have a camera... ● No news yet on whether **Carl Libertine** spent Christmas as he'd intended. Last time he spoke to us he wanted to "have Christmas on Watership Down". Not sure if he means the rabbit place or a new drug – if the latter we predict the cost to be about a fiver... ● Ash's **Tim Wheeler** *(right)* popped down London's Charing Cross Road for a spot of Christmas shopping – he "almost smiled" at *NME*, but was too laden down with bags as big as himself to stop for a chat... ● As Santa was dusting off his sleigh, **Jack White**'s flatmate **Ben Swank** and **Meg White**'s boyfriend **Oliver Soledad Brother**, were out on the town: first at Traffic in Shoreditch then, a few hours later, eating burgers at a greasy spoon caff nearby... ● **Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant** *(below, left)* appeared as drunk as drunk can possibly be on a jaunt to London electroclash joint Nag Nag Nag at the end of last year: last time we saw him he was bumping and grinding on the dancefloor with posho Britart lady **Sam Taylor-Wood**... ● **Courtney Love** had a bit of a Mary'n'Joseph experience when there was no room to get inn to **The Datsuns**' festive London show – so she did the only sensible thing and headed off to the bar at London's notorious Columbia Hotel, instead... ● And in final **Libertines** news, in spite of the fact that they were controversially NOT at the Rough Trade Christmas do, but *NME* particularly enjoyed the band's pre-Christmas show at the Rhythm Factory in Hoxton – the band suffered various stage invasions and were so shitfaced as they clambered onstage in the first place that they appeared to have forgotten how to tune their guitars. *Or* use a mic stand...

BRING OUT YOUR GOSSIP!

Text: 07753 483961 Email: plusones@nme.com

PHOTOGRAPHY: PA/WIRE/BIG PICTURES

HOT NEW BAND

Ty heroes (and BRMC's): Paul and Ryan Cobb

BRMC: 'TY COBB ARE AMAZING'

In fact, so smitten are Black Rebel with Ty Cobb's dreamy, soothing rock'n'roll, they've signed them up themselves. Here's how it all came about... Text: James Oldham Photography: Sam Jones

Robert Turner, BRMC: "The first time I time I saw Ty Cobb was a year ago at a club called the Khyber Pass in Philadelphia. It was us, The Strokes and them.

"Nick *(Jago, BRMC drummer)* got a CD-R off of them, which had 29 songs on it. He played it non-stop for the next six months in our van. It was really impressive, every song was amazing, that was the only reason we could stand listening to it for that long. I guess it got us through the tour.

"By the end of the year we'd played with them three times, and the third time round they gave me this virtual box set of their recordings. It was, like, seven CDs of music. Me and Nick argued about who was going to have it, but they gave it to me, so I won out in the end.

"They've got such an amazing amount of songs that you can live inside Ty Cobb pretty easy for a long time. I think I obsess about their records.

"After I heard all this stuff, I was on their back a lot, trying to find out what their plans were and what they were going to next. I get that bug in me where I want good music to be heard and there's nothing I can do about it. They didn't know how to go about getting a deal and they didn't have enough money to get a van, so this idea came up where they'd release something on our label *(Abstract Dragon)*.

"At first, I was a bit dubious, because we hadn't really wanted to get this label started just yet. So much of our focus is on our own band that I get really wary about taking on other things. But I just thought, 'One EP isn't going to kill us', and I knew that they do pretty much everything for themselves. They've got a real strong DIY ethic just like we do, and I think that's great.

"I've got no expectations about what's going to happen with them. We're just going to put it out and see what happens. It's a good feeling to help someone get their music out. If it's only this EP, then that's fine. Have I got a favourite track? Yes, but it's not on this EP. I don't have that much control over them. The whole idea is to stay as far away from them as possible. That's what Black Rebel always want anyway..."

GET YOUR CLICKS HERE!
GO TO NME.COM NOW TO LISTEN TO 'WHEEL' FROM TY COBB'S NEW EP

FACT FILE

WHO ARE THEY?
Centred around a creative core of Ryan and Paul Cobb (both guitars and vocals), they expand to a five-piece live with Jason Mehler (bass), Emily Stock (keyboards) and JP Kyper (drums).

WHERE ARE THEY FROM?
Philadelphia

WHAT DO THEY SOUND LIKE?
Taut, jagged pop in the style of The Beatles, Guided By Voices and BRMC.

WHERE CAN YOU HEAR THEM?
Although, somewhere, you can find a self-released debut album called 'Trophies For Lovemaking', your best bet is to get their new four-track EP '7y C066', out on February 17. It's the first release on Black Rebel's own Abstract Dragon label and it's totally brilliant.

VOTE NOW FOR THE NME CARLING AWARDS 2003

50 tickets for the big night to be won!

What a year! The year 2002 was when the new rock revolution swept the nation. Black Rebel Motorcycle Club! The Datsuns! The Libertines! The Vines! The Cooper Temple Clause! Everywhere you looked there was something new and truly essential to get excited about. Frankly, it was one of the greatest years for music that most of us up here can remember.

Well, now it's time to take stock. We at *NME* might have spent the last year telling you what we thought about everything under the sun, but now it's your turn. Yes, it's the *NME* Carling Awards 2003! And we really want to know what *you* think were the highlights of the year.

Who made the best album? Who had the best hair? And who got on your nerves? Let us know as soon as possible and you could be one of the 50 lucky readers invited to attend the star-studded awards themselves on February 13 in London. C'mon! With an offer like that, what are you waiting for?

PHOTOGRAPHY: ELLIS PARRINDER

HOW TO VOTE

ONLINE
Log on to our awards website *www.nmecarlingawards.com* where you can go and tap in your winners and send them to us instantly.

BY POST
Scribble your answers down on this page, cut it out, stick it in an envelope and send it to:
MY VOTE!, *NME* CARLING AWARDS 2003,
25th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street
London SE1 9LS.

BEST UK BAND

BEST INTERNATIONAL BAND

CARLING BEST ALBUM

BEST SINGLE

CARLING BEST NEW BAND

BEST LIVE BAND

BEST EVENT

BEST TV SHOW

BEST RADIO SHOW

MTV2 BEST VIDEO

BEST SOLO ARTIST

BEST LIVE VENUE

BEST HAIRCUT

BEST DRESSED

WORST BAND

WORST HAIRCUT

WORST DRESSED

MOST SEXY MAN

MOST SEXY WOMAN

VILLAIN OF THE YEAR

HERO OF THE YEAR

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THE TOP 20 LIVE EVENTS of 2003

All the bands you must see this year – for details, check the NME Gig Guide. Festival dates and line-ups will be announced in News over the coming months...

Text: Anthony Thornton Photography: Andy Willsher

THE NME AWARDS TOUR 2003

How would you like your new rock revolution? Shimmering in pop loveliness? Wrapped in robes and coming for your children? With a side salad of gloom and claustrophobia? Or just straight, no chaser, 100 per cent proof rock'n'roll? Thanks to the best *NME* Awards Tour line-up ever, you can have it each and every way, courtesy of **The Thrills**, **The Polyphonic Spree**, **Interpol** and **The Datsuns**. This unmissable rock cavalcade tours the UK from January 24 to February 9 (see *Gig Guide* for details).

NME AWARDS SHOWS 2003

Aka two hedonistic weeks of the most exciting bands on the planet, both established and up-and-coming. So far, acts confirmed include **The Streets**, who play London Brixton Academy on February 7. The rest of the confirmed shows are at the London WC2 Astoria, and include **Starsailor/Nada Surf/Hope Of The States** (February 4), **Nas** (5), **The Cooper Temple Clause/Ladytron/Ikara Colt/The Raveonettes** (6), **AFI** (7), **Idlewild/Cave-In/The Beatings/My Morning Jacket** (8), **The Datsuns/The Polyphonic Spree/Interpol/The Thrills** (9), **Saves The Day/The BellRays/Hell Is For Heroes** (10), **The Coral/The Basement/Sleepy Jackson** (11), **The Libertines/The Sights/The Hiss** (12). More are yet to be confirmed – see *News* for updates.

RADIOHEAD

Radiohead's first UK shows since September 2001 are bound to be nothing short of ecstatic. Sixteen new songs were previewed live on Radiohead's tour of Spain and Portugal last summer, audience highlights being 'Up On The Ladder' and 'There, There'. Whether these will appear again is a moot point but there's no doubt that coming hard on the heels of the new album's June release, this will be the tour of the summer.

THE WHITE STRIPES

With 'Elephant' in the bag and set for an April release, Jack and Meg take the beast on the road in the spring with their biggest UK dates so far. Prospects of them doing festival dates throughout the summer are also high.

All White on the night: the Stripes

EMINEM

What next in Marshall Mathers III's plan for world domination? A world tour was originally pencilled in for spring but is now scheduled to hit the UK in summer.

REM

The alt.rock old stagers are giving their forthcoming greatest hits album an almighty push. A world tour reaches these shores in spring, and the band have already confirmed dates a number of dates for Glastonbury, T In The Park, Manchester Move and Dublin. Expect 'Losing My Religion', 'Stand' and very little from 'Monster'.

THE STROKES

For the best part of a year, The Strokes have included new songs 'I Can't Win', established opener 'Meet Me In The Bathroom' and the mighty 'The Way It Is'. Now the time's come to record them, it's unlikely that we'll see them on the road again before autumn – when they'll either make the step up to the arenas, or play a multitude of dates in medium-sized venues.

COLDPLAY

The makers of *NME*'s Album Of The Year join an elite of artists including Oasis and U2 with two dates at the 18,000-capacity Earls Court in April. With the knack of making the largest shows seem intimate, these gigs promise to cement their position at the top.

THE KILLS

Having seized The White Stripes' minimalist blueprint of boy/girl blues duo and invested it with a sharp dose of bristling paranoia, The Kills reached a new audience with their Primal Scream support slot in December. Now VV and Hotel will spread the darkness across the country at the end of next month to support their debut album, out March 3.

MUSE

Matt Bellamy and co have quietly become one of the biggest guitar bands in Britain. While on record they're fantastically grandiose, it's in the live arena where their rock operatics sound most at home. Expect them at an enormodome near you towards the end of summer.

STARSAILOR

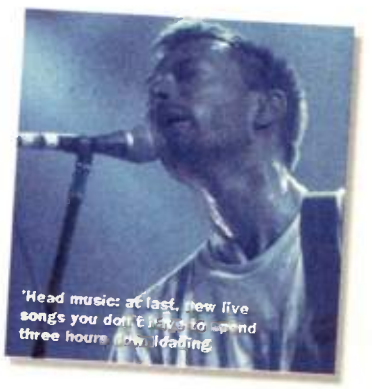
Touched by the hand of legendary producer Phil Spector, Starsailor's second album sees a beefier, more expansive band with a spring in their step. They kickstarted their return with a hometown gig at Warrington (see page 36), with new songs 'Four To The Floor' and 'Music Was Saved' declared instant classics. Expect gigs around the April release of the album.

BLUR

They've said they won't tour their forthcoming album, out in February. But since even Gorillaz got a live outing, their new Coxonless set is bound to make an appearance somewhere. Expect one-off events rather than a tour.

THE CORAL

One year on from their opening slot on the *NME* Awards Tour 2002, The Coral take their bewitching live show countrywide. Starting in Dublin (February 2) and finishing in Oxford (15), expect new songs from their second album, due in April.


'Head music: at last, new live songs you don't have to spend three hours now reading

BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB

Black Rebel's "harder and faster" second album will be with us in early summer, from which nine songs were showcased on their recent UK tour. Expect a full tour and festival dates from May.

Yes please: the YYYs at work

...ical Express 11 January

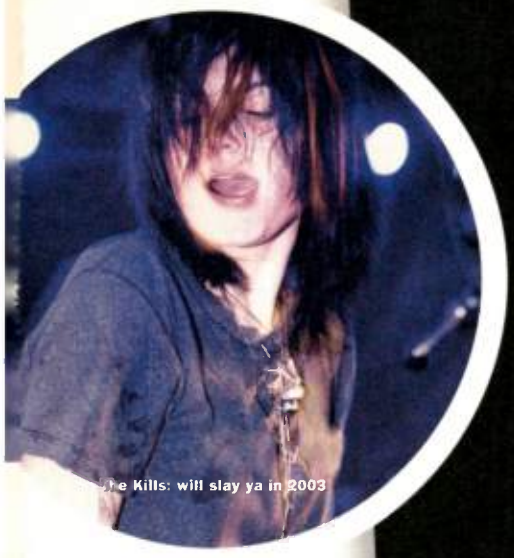
Get some summer Shady: Eminem returns

JAY-Z

The last time Jigga was over at the end of 2001, ticketless fans attempted to gain entry to Hammersmith's Po Na Na by storming the place. Since he's playing his biggest ever shows in January and February, there should be enough tickets to go round this time.

YEAH YEAH YEAHS

The seductive combination of three of the coolest people ever to get on a stage



The Kills: will slay ya in 2003

The Datsuns: hot-wired, souped-up stars of the *NME* Awards Tour 2003

together combined with their unique take on the point where PJ Harvey and Siouxsie & The Banshees cross made Yeah Yeah Yeahs one of the most exciting acts of 2002. They'll be touring at the end of February, supporting a new single and forthcoming album.

SUM 41

If you like your thrills dumb and your music punk-poppy, it's hard to beat an hour or so spent with Sum 41. Full dates: Manchester Evening News Arena (February 1), Nottingham Arena (2), Glasgow Braehead Arena (3), Dublin Point (4), Cardiff International Arena (6), Plymouth Pavilions (7) and London Wembley Arena (8).

AUDIOSLAVE

The combination of the talents of two of the biggest rock groups of the '90s – namely Rage Against The Machine and Soundgarden – has produced the first supergroup of the 21st century. Audioslave play a one-off date at the London Astoria on January 17 to support extraordinary single 'Cochise'.

THE HIVES

Whether you saw them at *NME*'s special 150-capacity show or onstage at Reading, you'll know that there's more to The Hives than 'Hate To Say I Told You So'. Howlin' Pelle and co will be taking their James Brown-meets-the-Ramones cavalcade back on the road from autumn.

THE MUSIC

Suffice to say, they've gone from nowhere to Brixton and Manchester Academy in under 18 months through the traditional method of touring their arses off. Although the current dates of the UK tour finish in mid-January, it's a safe bet you'll see them later in the year as they consolidate their position as one of the most explosive live bands in Britain.

The Hives: "What's that boys and girls? Who's behind me?"

PHOTOGRAPHY: RETNA/LFI/WIRE IMAGE

JOE STRUMMER

A lifetime of rebellion

Honest and inspirational: how punk's most passionate voice changed the face of rock forever

Text: Steve Sutherland

The Monday before Christmas, I'm doing some desperate last minute shopping in Covent Garden. I get a txt. It says: "Strummer's dead." I leave the shop and walk to the end of the road. Sure enough, outside the newsagent's, an ad for the *Evening Standard* reads: "Punk legend dead."

How come the world hasn't stopped? How come Paul Weller's still shopping for hats? I saw him only ten minutes ago trying on a trilby. I buy the *Standard*. I want to know: how did Joe go? What magnificent end had the fates saved up to crown the final chapter in the story of Joe Strummer, the man who, with The Clash, politicised popular music in the mid-1970s and made sure that a requirement of all decent music made ever since is that it has to *say something*?

Was he hunted down by the CIA on a covert mission inside the mountain lair of Nicaraguan rebel forces? Was he trampled by a police horse in a mass anti-hunting rally? Was he found naked, face down in a pile of finest Colombian marching powder with an Uzi by his side and an icepick through his spine? No. Joe had a heart attack. He took his dog out for a walk on the Somerset hills, came back home, sat down by the fire in the kitchen of his cosy rural farmhouse and just pegged out. He was 50 and his death held no particular mystery or symbolic meaning at all. He went out just like your dad might. Or mine.

It made me think of something that happened to me last summer. This is a true story. One night, at about 11pm, I was driving down Upper Street in Islington, London, slightly anxious because one of my headlights was out. I pulled up at a red light. A black cab pulled up beside me and the cabbie – maybe 45-ish – motioned at me to wind down my window. Expecting the inevitable headlight news, I reluctantly complied. He leaned over, yanked the fag from his lips, and this is what he said: "Hey, mate, who d'you reckon was best – The Clash or The Jam?" Completely out of nowhere. Just like that. It threw me for a second but, as the lights turned green, I just had time to holler back: "The Clash!" He gave me the thumbs up and turned left.

I was sad about Joe and, in a sentimental flush, I started concocting this conceit where it was Joe, not me, who was driving the car with the wrecked headlight. And I thought how he'd have probably chortled that phlegmy laugh of his, part amused and part proud that, 16 years after he split the band, The Clash were still the subject of a random debate on his beloved London streets. And I thought how tempted the young Joe would have been to mythologise the incident into a song. How he'd have probably said the cabbie yelled back, "Nah, mate! The Jam!" and how they'd both stopped there and then at the lights and had it out with their fists, the traffic blaring a symphony of angry horns at the hold-up, because the honour of pop music is worth fighting for.

And then I thought how the older Joe, while still a bit proud, would have been saddened that the cabbie didn't recognise him; how his days of being the fashionable face of the revolution were 20 years past and how, no matter how many encouraging words were written about his latest band, The Mescaleros, those words were really so much wishful thinking because The Mescaleros simply weren't The Clash.

And then I got a bit pissed off about how pathetic Joe's death was, how it had let his life down. And as the obits were churned out in the papers the next day and respectable blokes who used to be punks were saying things like Joe was their Lennon, their Marley, their Elvis, their Cobain, it seemed so unfair. Lennon the god gunned down by a lunatic fan, Marley the victim of a cancer that his beliefs would not allow to be treated, Cobain blowing his brains out because, among other reasons, music had let him down, Elvis so bloated with ego that his insides literally burst. All somehow fitting last chapters to extraordinary careers. Joe seemed to get mugged of the martyr's death he'd been romancing most of his life.

But then, thinking back over the cabbie incident, I realised that I'd got it all wrong. That it wasn't Joe's death that *NME* wished me to mark with these words, it was his life. It was about that greying cabbie with Joe on his mind.

And then I realised that Joe Strummer is still alive. No matter that his heart stopped beating a few weeks ago now. No matter that he last made a great record 16 years ago. Strummer is alive in that cabbie and in thousands of other geezers that he touched along the way because he seemed real to them, spoke their language, fought their fights and made the same mistakes they'd have made had they found themselves in his situation. The world didn't stop turning when Joe Strummer died but it did turn out slightly differently because of his life.

And it's safe to say that The Specials, Green Day, Rage Against The Machine, Rancid, Sum 41 and tons of other bands would never have existed if it wasn't for The Clash and that

CONTINUES OVER

Everything he said was a slogan, everything he did a symbolic act, either premeditated or re-engineered with hindsight (and a little fact-stretching) into another grand chapter in the legendary tableau that was The Clash

JOE STRUMMER

Joe Strummer, The Clash: 1952-2002

THE MAGNIFICENT TEN

The greatest Joe Strummer records

White Riot
The Clash's first single and a call to arms for a nation's youth.

Police & Thieves
The Clash tackle reggae and make Junior Murvin's apocalypse their own on 'The Clash'.

Garageland
An early *NME* review of The Clash said they should be returned to the garage, the doors should be closed and someone should leave the engine running. Typically Strummer wrote a song about it.

1977
"No Elvis, Beatles or The Rolling Stones in 1977". Strummer, sick of his generation being patronised, drew a line in the sand.

(White Man) In Hammersmith Palais
Astonishing song of a clash between cultural expectations.

Rock The Casbah
When the United States embarked on the Gulf War, this was the first song played on the Forces' radio station. Could be dusted down and brought back into action any day now.

London Calling
Armageddon, Thames stylee.

Straight To Hell
Such a great song, movie director Alex Cox made a film about it.

Charlie Don't Surf
Strummer in love with Vietnam chic.

Should I Stay Or Should I Go
More Mick Jones than Strummer but The Clash's only UK Number One, thanks to a Levi's ad. "Like trousers, like brain," indeed!

Strummer encouraged Clash fans to believe that together they had the ability to shape their own destinies and that somehow this was a working class ideal that had been ground out of us

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

none of the following would have made records half as great as they did if they hadn't heard Joe Strummer or someone deeply influenced by him.

Nirvana: Kurt Cobain bought lock, stock and double barrel into punk rock as the voice of the disenfranchised. Joe Strummer and John Lydon invented that. The Stone Roses: Ian Brown's 'fuck you' arrogance was copped straight off Strummer. Oasis: then Liam copped it off Ian Brown. The Smiths: there would never have been a 'Meat Is Murder' or 'The Queen Is Dead' without Strummer because, before The Clash, rock music had no idea that it could say anything incendiary about anything. Manic Street Preachers: stole just about everything from The Clash, including looking like pricks playing soldiers dressing up in silly military uniforms. Eminem: Marshall Mathers' relationship to ghetto music normally associated with people of a different colour is exactly the same as Strummer's was 20 years ago. It's not about black and white, it's about right and wrong, haves and have-nots. Strummer saw that very clearly and he saw it first. The Streets: ditto. Blur: Strummer's 'I'm So Bored With The USA' and 'London Calling', songs that exhibited pride in one's own background instead of hankering after the greener grass, were the foundation of Britpop.

And so it goes on. Looking through my record collection, barely anything post-1977 that's really any good doesn't in some direct or roundabout way profit from The Clash having blazed their trail. And that got me thinking about how and why Strummer is so influential. Some Clash records sound great and all that but some, in all honesty, sound pretty naff. And then I realised that The Clash were deliberately more than just a series of record releases and gigs, they were a way of life.

There was no down time or time off in The Clash. You were Clash 24-7 because, once Strummer had declared to the world that "The Clash are the only band that matters", he had to make as good as he could on that promise. And what that promise implied was that, while all the rest was fake showbiz, The Clash were real and human which made them, in some marvellous way, utterly and culpably honest.

The Clash, remember, were an idea before they became a band. And that idea became an ideal. It made me laugh when some TV company interviewed me about Joe the Monday before Christmas because the interviewer had this line of questioning that inevitably – as it does on such occasions – leads to the conclusion that things were better in the good old days. The condition of pop in 2002, he reckoned, was a disgrace and surely The Clash were the 'For Real' antithesis of *Pop Idol* and *Popstars* and all that crap.

What made me laugh was that The Clash were every bit as contrived as Hear'Say. So were the Sex Pistols, come to that. It's just that the Svengalis behind the two punk projects – Malcolm McLaren for the Pistols and Bernie Rhodes for The Clash – wanted the exact opposite effect (though the same result) as the Pete Watermans of this world. Where the Watermans want to perpetrate the status quo and make millions out of giving people more of what they already think they want, McLaren and Rhodes created monsters that mangled the status quo, created a brand new order and, the plan was, to make them millionaires just the same.

When the TV interviewer bleated on about how talentless Gareth Gates really is, I had to chuckle because Paul Simonon was chosen to play bass with The Clash simply because he looked so drop dead gorgeous; he couldn't play a fucken note. The only difference was, that was the whole point. The be-all and end-all of being in a band in the pre-Clash '70s was that you had to be able to play. And, amazing at it may seem today, the idea that musicianship is about the least important thing in making a great band seemed absolute sacrilege.

Strummer knew it, though. He was well ahead of his time and instinctively knew that music without a message was about to be reduced to just pathetic, patronising noise. He was happily plying his trade singing feisty but trad R&B with The 101ers (named after the street number of their squat) until the fateful day that the Sex Pistols supported them.

"It hit me like an atom bomb," he said later about the scruffy bunch of urchins who were pissing off his audience.

And what hit him the most? The fact that they were arguing over which trousers to wear before they went onstage. This was a whole new concept in what being in a band really meant and, as soon as Bernie asked him to join fledgling rock star guitarist Mick Jones and Simonon in The Clash, he never looked back.

In his first ever *NME* interview, Strummer set out the Clash stall: "I think people ought to know that we're anti-fascist, anti-violence, anti-racist and we're pro-creative." Not a single mention of guitar solos anywhere!

Why Joe Strummer is so important today is that, when he declared that The Clash were "the only band that matters", he wasn't bullshitting or boasting, he fucking well meant it. And then he went about doing something that no-one had ever done before: he used his band as a means to deliver his rage and frustration at the state of the nation, made the connection that it went hand-in-hand with the state of music and had the audacity to suggest that combined social and musical reform are ours for the making. In other words, we are all, in some ways, in The Clash.

And to be in The Clash is an honour and a responsibility, not just a job. Strummer understood, even more than Lydon, and a lot more than anyone working in the rock'n'roll business except Eminem, that what fans want is a drama to be involved in, a hero to follow and an idol to worship. We want martyrs, people who are prepared to set themselves up as super versions of us to test the levels of censorship and temptation on our behalf so that when they fall, we don't have to.

And what if they succeed? Well, no-one really *succeeds*. That's the beauty of it. Because every fucker dies and, even if they've lived a life beyond our wildest dreams, the cancer in our souls will always rejoice that all their wealth and fame couldn't deliver them from the reaper. "You can't take it with you" – what a sad, splendid indictment of humanity that we stumble on, self-satisfied in that knowledge. Strummer knew all that and yet he still said, 'Fuck it, let's go!' He understood that, to be worth anything, to be truly remarkable, you have to mean something, to mark yourself out. And he willingly launched himself as an unelected spokesperson for his generation so that, through his theatrical identity, others might just establish their own. Besides which, of course, it was totally fun.

So Strummer set about, from the get-go, working on the *myth* of The Clash. Everything he said was a slogan, everything he did a symbolic act, either premeditated or re-engineered with hindsight (and a little fact-stretching) into another grand chapter in the legendary tableau that was The Clash.

Joe didn't fuck around. In many of the obits that ran in the papers following his death, the phrase "he wore his heart on his sleeve" appeared a lot. Well, true enough, that's just what he did. He changed his name from Mellor to Strummer because... he strummed. The Clash were The Clash and not The Mirrors, The Phones or The Outsiders (all names mooted at the outset) because The Clash intended to *clash* with everything they could.

It was Lydon who would later coin the phrase *"Anger is an energy"* with Public Image Ltd, his way out of punk's stylistic straightjacket (the Pistols were incapable of making the musical strides that The Clash made and Lydon needed Keith Levene, an original Clash member, to help him out). But Strummer actually lived by those words. John Lydon wrote his side of the story in his autobiography *Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs*. It's a crying shame that Strummer never got round to writing his because he was a man who saw life in terms of setting an example. He considered his every action symbolic of the cause and his every utterance of political importance.

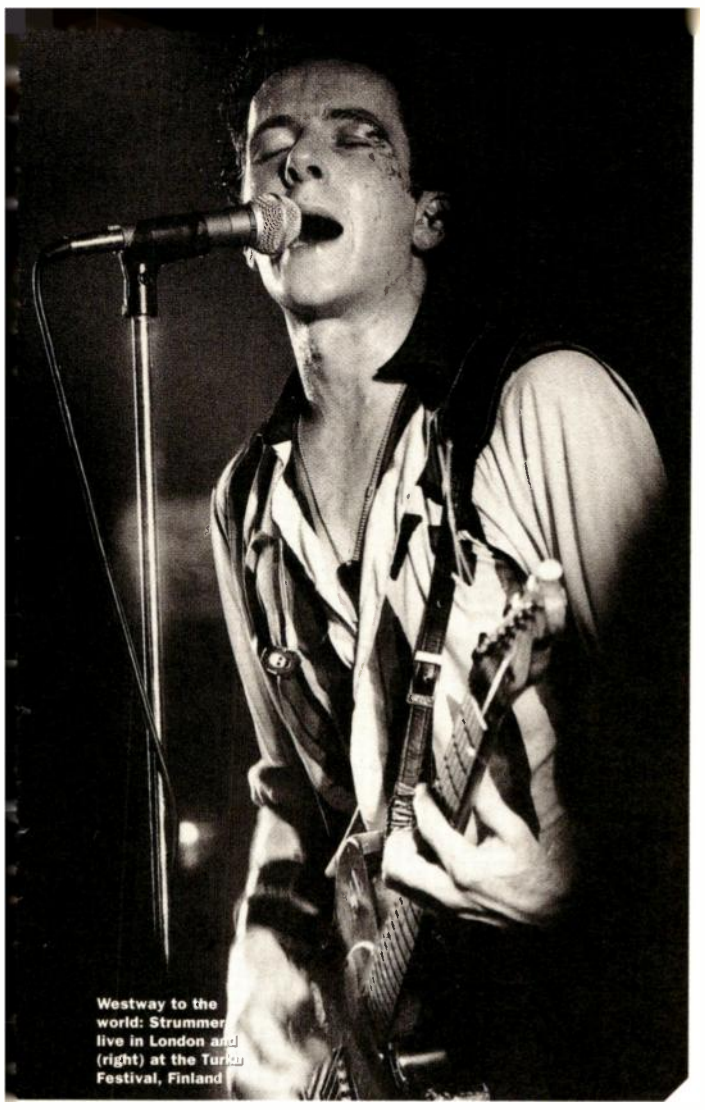
"Like trousers, like brain," is one of his sayings that I particularly like, delivered in a threatening manner to a writer from the foremost punk fanzine *Sniffin' Glue*. Joe was sneering at the geezer's flares and fiddling with a flick-knife at the time.

I've spent the last couple of weeks since he died revisiting his records and marvelling at how his influence is still alive and kicking in all the best music being made today. These are records that seem to say: ALWAYS DRAW A LINE IN THE SAND. ALWAYS STICK YOUR NECK OUT. KNIVES ARE FUCKING GREAT... BUT GUNS ARE EVEN BETTER. YOU ARE THE MUSIC YOU MAKE. EVERY CRISIS SHOULD BE MADE INTO A DRAMA. YOU ARE NOT IN A BAND, YOU'RE IN A SOAP OPERA. THERE ARE NO MISTAKES, JUST DIFFERENT ROUTES TO NOTORIETY. SUFFER FOR YOUR ART (BUT DON'T DIE FOR IT). MUSIC WITH NO IDEA(L)S IS JUST NOISE. ALWAYS DO IT YOURSELF. BE A HERO. IT'S A DIRTY JOB BUT SOMEONE'S GOTTA DO IT AND IT MIGHT AS WELL BE YOU. SET YOUR PRINCIPLES AND STICK TO THEM, EVEN WHEN THEY'RE SHOT FULL OF HOLES. USE THE *NME*. SMALL TRUTHS MAY BE SACRIFICED TO THE GOOD OF THE CAUSE. NOTHING IS SACRED. FOR FUCK'S SAKE, SAY SOMETHING. THERE IS NO BLACK, THERE IS NO WHITE. THERE IS JUST RIGHT AND WRONG. MUSIC CHANGES LIVES. And a whole bunch of other stuff.

These are songs that, because Strummer insisted that he and his songs were one and that he and we are the same, became *our* songs. As Mark P, editor of *Sniffin' Glue*, wrote about the first Clash album: "It's like watching my life in a movie." These are songs that made what Clash fans did meaningful because they were

The last gang in town: (l-r) Strummer, Jones, Topper Headon and Paul Simonon

Complete control: Strummer in the studio and (below) The Clash's response to radio bans



Westway to the world: Strummer live in London and (right) at the Turku Festival, Finland

songs about what they did.

Take the first Clash single, 'White Riot'. It could have happened to anyone. Written and recorded in an era where racial tension was mounting to one of its periodic peaks in the UK with the 'indigenous' white poor scapegoating the 'immigrant' West Indians for the lack of jobs, paucity of ready cash etc, while the government smirked and looked on, the title was open to immediate and understandable misinterpretation.

Strummer was mortified but ballsed it out, telling many an interviewer how the song came about, and building the myth in the retelling – a habit which he pretty well perfected over the coming years. 'White Riot' was the result of Strummer and Paul Simonon attending the Notting Hill Carnival in 1976. Expecting trouble from the West Indian contingent, the police responded with a larger than ever presence. When it all kicked off and the coppers were pelted with cans and bricks, Strummer and Simonon were caught up in the scuffles. The way Strummer told it (and retold it, polishing the drama along the way), Simonon tried unsuccessfully to torch a car and the pair of them narrowly escaped serious injury when crushed against the chicken wire running along the Westway over Ladbroke Grove. Simonon, who'd run for fun with the Shed firms at Chelsea and felt no need to glorify violence, saw the whole affair as no big deal, but Strummer was exhilarated by the proximity of violence and on fire with inspiration; especially when, he claimed, he was faced down, with a blade in his pocket, by some West Indian rioters who didn't appreciate his fellowship in the struggle against The Man.

This, legendarily, led Strummer to decide that while the black man was more than happy to chuck a brick to make his protest felt, white guys had become pussies, educated out of the instinct to rebel even though many were in the same boat as their Jamaican brothers. Hence 'White Riot', the sort of rumbling that sends shivers through white suburbia just as Eminem does today.

It's worth remembering that when 'White Riot' came out, the National Front wasn't the minority joke it is today (although never underestimate the hunger of the beast). The Clash could easily have found themselves in the same predicament as Sham 69, another class-conscious band who, in rallying the council estate underprivileged, unwittingly gathered a racist following. That The Clash didn't was down to Strummer and his gut feeling for the zeitgeist. What Strummer tapped into was that the most righteous music being made at the time was reggae, and he saw himself as some kind of rasta with the rastafarian faith rewritten for white people. In place of the Marcus Garvey-inspired Black Star Liner transporting the chosen ones from slavery back to their rightful kingdom of Africa, Strummer's religion was The Clash, a cause to believe in despite – no, because of – all its inconsistencies.

While Rastafarians truly believed – and continue to believe – that they are the true descendants of Solomon and Sheba and, therefore, are predestined to eternal bliss, so Strummer encouraged Clash fans to believe that together they had the ability to shape their own destinies and that somehow this was a working class ideal that had been ground out of us under the oppressive heel of successive uncaring governments.

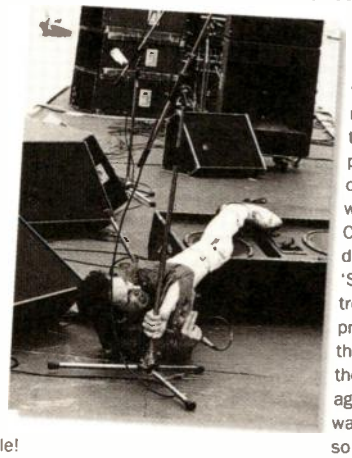
Strummer was in awe of the black brothers' shamelessly violent reaction to unjust, victimising authority and felt that, regardless of colour, there was a power to be harnessed in proud, uncompromised revolt. So Strummer introduced reggae to The Clash's set – Junior Murvin's 'Police & Thieves', Toots & The Maytals' 'Pressure Drop', Willie Williams' 'Armagideon Time', Mikey Dread's dub side of 'Sandinista!' – and, amazingly, made them work. More than the style, Strummer was in tune with the spirit although he got an, ahem, rude awakening when he travelled to Jamaica after recording The Clash's first album and, again as he told it, barely escaped with his life. Seems the locals didn't take kindly to brother Strummer, whatever his revolutionary zeal, and he and Mick Jones fled back to Blighty – an episode which, characteristically, was recorded for posterity on the second Clash album in a song called 'Safe European Home'.

Strummer would later also embrace the emerging rap scene in New York. Having stated he was '...So Bored With The USA', he pretty much moved the band there later in their career, performing a 16-night residency off Times Square in New York in 1981, pioneering again by offering Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five as support. The Clash would also cover rap in their own inimitable style – 'The Magnificent Seven' and 'This Is Radio Clash' two prime examples – but no music, so long as it carried impact, was anathema to them, hence the rockabilly Joe Ely and avant gardeners Suicide were also Clash supports along the way. Strummer emerged from the chrysalis of punk faster than any other of the prime practitioners, never allowing The Clash to be straightjacketed into the one-two-three-four no-nonsense headbangers of media caricature.

Strummer would later revisit and re-examine how his idealisation of West Indian culture in Britain was at odds with reality in his masterpiece, '(White Man) In Hammersmith Palais', where a spooked-out Strummer attends a black event as the only white guy and is simultaneously disappointed that the music playing is pop and not revolutionary dub, and threatened by suspicious gig-goers. Managing to lambast fellow punkers for their cowardice along the way, '...Palais' is an astoundingly honest portrait of a self-aware singer recognising that, in his desire to turn his band into a legend, he will, from time to time, be fucking with the facts.

There are so many other examples of how and why Joe Strummer is still alive and important today, I'll quit on just one more. As much as he liked to dress and talk like a freedom fighter (or a movie version of one, anyway), he naïvely allowed The Clash to sign to CBS Records, pretty much the Antichrist to budding rock revolutionaries. CBS was big business, an unfeeling, heartless corporation and everything that Strummer and the band were opposed to. Not only that, they signed for £100,000 – an astronomical sum in those days. Mark P declared immediately that they had "sold out".

As it happens, though, Strummer managed to turn a naïve decision into a battleground on which The Clash could unfold their ideological war. Capital Radio and Radio 1 refused to play 'White Riot' because it was nasty, dirty, filthy punk rock. CBS did nothing about it so Joe and his mates sneaked round in the dead of night and painted the song title on the windows of the radio stations' headquarters. Then, to make matters even more headline-worthy, the crowd smashed up the seats when The Clash played London's Rainbow Theatre; a real riot! And the band got arrested a few times – they stole a pillowcase in Newcastle and got caught, they painted their name on a wall and got caught, they shot at some pigeons with an air rifle and got caught – all of which allowed them to name one tour Out On Parole!



Then – oh glorious day – CBS betrayed them. They released 'Remote Control', a track off their debut album, without their consent. In those days, to put out a single off an album was considered a rip-off and so the follow-up became Strummer's recorded strop – 'Complete Control', produced by mad reggae genius Lee 'Scratch' Perry. It was a fabulous irony – the big record company releasing such a damning critique of its practices. The song went *"Complete CONtrol"*, a reference to broken promises over career decisions – but this still didn't stop Strummer acceding to CBS' suggestion that the second album, the disappointing 'Give 'Em Enough Rope', be produced by someone who could polish them up for the American market.

It was another decision for which Strummer was roundly rebuked in the punk press and only mollified when 'London Calling' (a double LP) and 'Sandinista!' (a treble) were priced down in the shops, with the band agreeing to waive royalties so the fans got a good deal; Strummer all the while thinking, wrongly, that in recording these albums, he was quickly fulfilling the CBS deal which was for eight albums. All of which didn't stop him also releasing 'Hitsville UK', through CBS, in praise of independent record companies.

So every Strummer song came with its own life story and the legend was sealed, a legend which is still doing its work even now that Strummer's dead. In among the obits which rightly claimed that he was a man of principle and that he had always resisted offers to reform The Clash (they split in 1986 but a reunion was expected for their induction into America's Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in March) because he felt it would damage their reputation, was the story of Joe's last gig. In reality it took place in Liverpool with The Mescaleros on November 22 but the facts are waived in favour of the Acton Firefighters' benefit on November 15 when he was joined onstage by Jones for the first time since 1983. The gig was instigated by Andy Gilchrist, General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, who had been enthused and politicised as part of the crowd when The Clash headlined the Rock Against Racism rally in Hackney's Victoria Park in 1978. Another life touched and turned round.

Joe Strummer is dead. Long live Joe Strummer.

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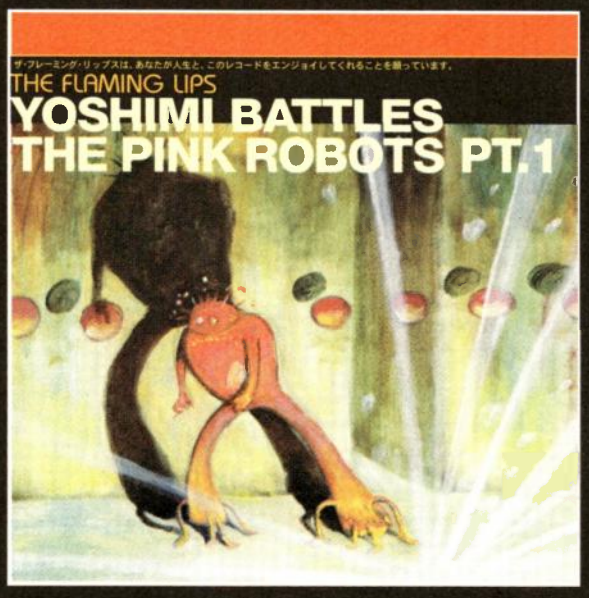

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HIP-HOP? INDIAN!

With rap plundering India for samples, it was only a matter of time before the world took notice of Coventry's Panjabi MC, who's done just the opposite to create the irresistable bhangra banger 'Mundian To Bach Ke'

Text: Siân Pattenden Photography: James Looker

"I heard a rumour which said that Coventry is the most violent place in the world." Panjabi MC is sitting in his front room in a suburb of the monstrous Midlands carbuncle. "I write raps about the violence, about the city. We used to have a big skinhead movement here. They hung a Sikh guy in a graveyard a few years ago, a friend of mine."

Twenty-five-year-old Rajinder Rai grew up listening to Ice T, Dr Dre and the Panjabi folk music known as desi. He has witnessed aggression on the streets. His music is not namby pamby Bollywood knees-aloft, nor ladies' chill-out. Floor-stomping bhangra anthems, more like.

Raj's new single, 'Mundian To Bach Ke', is actually four years old. Taken from PMC's fourth album 'Legalised' (the most successful bhangra album ever), it's an irresistible combination of hip-hop drums, chattering tablas and hypnotic Indian. When DJing, Raj has only to play the first few seconds and the crowd – any crowd – goes mental.

"It's not just Asian audiences," says Raj. "I've played to a room of white people and when I drop the tune the reaction is incredible. I start mixing hip-hop and Bhangra and make it subtle, but they want the pure Asian sound."

With a title that translates as 'Beware Of The Boys', the track knocked around the dance scene until LA-based production cartel AV8 did a remix which ensured hip-hop DJs picked up on it in the US. Tim Westwood got behind it 18 months ago and the rest of Radio 1 followed. Now it gets a re-release, bringing a stamp of authenticity to the current fad for Asian-influenced hip-hop. In recent months, Busta Rhymes' 'Pass The Courvoisier (Part 2)', Truth Hurts' 'Addictive' and Erick Sermon Featuring Redman's 'React' have all trodden the same path (actually, it's a two-way street: 'Mundian To Bach Ke''s sample of the *Knight Rider* theme was first used on Busta Rhymes' 'Turn It Up/Fire It Up'). However, Raj is not always impressed.

"With the Redman track, they've taken a mainstream Indian vocal," he sniffs. "To me, that's like putting a Shakin' Stevens vocal on a techno track! They don't realise the vocal is at odds with the music, it's just Indian music to them."

PMC spent his formative years at the 'daytimers' in Coventry's nightclubs – Asian teens would miss school to listen to bhangra and get ratted, primarily because their parents wouldn't let them out at night. Soon discovering that there was a distinct lack of tunes for young fans who snubbed mainstream Bollywood-style music, Raj mixed hip-hop beats with samples of traditional desi songs, creating a completely new sound. His first single was taken from a live recording of him MCing over beats. His parents, who own a clothes shop in Coventry, knew a bloke in Birmingham who distributed bootleg videos.

"He took the DAT tape and duplicated it," says Raj. "All the other record companies thought it was a bit unconventional. They started off a rumour saying the track had Islamic hidden messages running through it and I started getting death threats. I loved it, though – front page of all the Midlands papers for my first single."

PMC was still doing Computer Science at Leicester University when he started making music in 1993. That year, Birmingham-based bhangra label Nachural offered him a deal if he would deliver a desi album with beats, but drop the MCing.

"They said no-one wanted to hear me rap," says Raj. "So I called it 'Souled Out', because it wasn't hip-hop, which I wanted to do. Then they said, 'Do one more', so I called it 'Another Sellout'. After that they said they wanted me to do another one and it carried on like that... here we are, seven albums later."

'Mundian To Bach Ke' has put PMC on a global level. Clubs in Ibiza, Ayia Napa and Miami are going nuts trying to book him. And Raj's former associates are mad with envy or simply mercenary, asking for a percentage on tunes they didn't invent.

"Right now, all you get are backstabbers," says Raj, who won't let *NME* take pictures of his home studio in case fellow producers see them, and clock his "secret" set-up. "Trying to take the glory, trying to get a piece, rather than trading skills. We should all work together."

But his international DJ status must have some pros, surely. What about the ladies?

"I used to get girls phoning me saying they like my music. Now they're asking, 'Where are you? We want to see you!' I tried it once, I said, 'I'm going to be in Leicester,' and they found me. They'd trained it from London and booked a hotel, then searched the city until they spotted me."

Were they good-looking?

"Yeah."

Raj's family aren't musical, and when he visits relations back in the Punjab region of India, they're not impressed.

"In India, we still have the caste system. Musicians are one of the lowest castes; they are the guys you make fun of, however talented. My parents weren't very impressed when I got into music. They moved to this country so I would become a lawyer or work in IT."

PMC still wants to introduce a greater hip-hop feel to his music. He's confident he can be commercial *and* please the underground. With a best-of compilation due out sometime this year and both Westwood and Fatboy Slim playing 'Mundian To Bach Ke', it seems like Panjabi MC has managed it already.

"In India, musicians are the guys you make fun of, however talented. My parents moved here so I'd become a lawyer or work in IT"

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WATCH THE VIDEO FOR 'MUNDIAN TO BACH KE' ON *NME.COM* NOW

BUT WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

'Mundian To Bach Ke': the chorus translated

"Be careful of the boys/ You've only just grown up/It's not your fault that you've got beautiful eyes/Once you've realised this you will become shy/Look after your youth/ This time won't come again"

The macabre world of THE FAINT

A tale of five serious young worm-eaters from Nebraska caught between rock and electroclash and hoping to wear the scars

Text: Piers Martin
Photography: Joe Plimmer

It is not difficult to spot Omaha, Nebraska's The Faint on entering the smoke-filled lounge of London's notorious rock hotel, the Columbia, one crisp winter's morning. Hunched around a table decorated with fag ash and drained coffee cups are five pallid-skinned dandies with post-sex hair, dirty jeans and suitcase-crushed black shirts. Their wrists hang heavy with bangles. They look like serious young men with the weight of the world on their slender shoulders. They are The Faint – artists, musicians, creatives – and they've come to rock your world in a strange and amusing fashion.

Slip on The Faint's latest album, 'Danse Macabre', hike up the volume and you'll be instantly floored by its rude blasts of medieval electro-rock and unremittingly nihilistic tone. Out of time and out of place, they sound like no-one else around today.

The group sit awkwardly between electroclash and the new rock revolution. Play their record in a club and watch the freaks leap from their seats and onto the floor. Their music openly references '80s synth heroes like Gary Numan and Duran Duran. Their lyrics, delivered in a desperate yelp by 28-year-old singer/keyboardist Todd Baechle, entertain the kind of wrist-slitting concerns which 'misunderstood' students might scrawl in the common room during break. With songs entitled 'Agenda Suicide', 'Let The Poison Spill From Your Throat' and 'Ballad Of A Paralysed Citizen', The Faint are clearly not to be taken lightly. Rather, they should be taken at all times with a generous pinch of salt.

"We try to make the themes and ideas behind the songs, lyrically and musically, a little more complex," says Todd asked if The Faint simply make good old-fashioned pop music. "We want to give the listeners more to think about than just *'La la I love you'*. I think that the lyrics can be kinda depressing in a way, though."

It wasn't always this heavy. As teens, Todd and younger brother Clark, The Faint's drummer, immersed themselves in the skate culture of the 1980s and '90s. Todd's friend, Joel Petersen, now 28 and the group's bassist and electronics whizz, also skated and used to babysit Clark, and occasionally escorted him to Omaha's skate parks. But Todd's career as a top-flight skater was cruelly cut short by arthritis in his knees and wrists. "I couldn't really walk and was looking for something else to do. The group wasn't so planned," he admits.

Searching for a more meaningful expression of their abundant creativity, the trio formed a lo-fi folk-tinged band in 1994 called Norman Bailer and played shows at coffee houses in Omaha. Saddle Creek, back then a nascent label named Lumberjack, released a cassette of their doodlings. Calling themselves The Faint in 1996, they then recorded an album of upbeat dance-flavoured light rock named 'Media' which they toured throughout the US. In 1998 keyboardist Jacob Thiele joined, contributing an electronic edge that paved the way for the brave new sound on 1999's breakthrough LP, 'Blank-Wave Arcade'. With the recruitment of sensitive long-haired guitarist Dapose from Omaha death metallers LEAD, the stage was finally set for 'Danse Macabre'. This was the addictive, nervy album that secured them a cult following in the States and a high-profile support slot on No Doubt's US stadium tour earlier this year.

"No Doubt were sort of fans of ours," says Jacob. "They'd heard the CD, a couple of 'em had gone to our show. We got on really well with them. They're a great band."

The Faint are not the kind of group who will idly gossip when there are more worthy subjects to discuss. Chess fan Dapose reckons that The Faint "try to create an artistic statement which is the reason people should buy our album". Joel, who also releases experimental electronic gear as Broken Spindles, would like to make an avant-garde movie. The band produce all their own artwork, clothes and videos. "We wanna be a complete multimedia group," nods Todd proudly.

"I'm trying to get into make-up," announces Clark, 21.

"Really?" says Dapose.

"Yeah, I wanna learn more about special effects make-up like gashes and scars."

"Next time you see us we'll look like *(cartoon metal gonks)* Gwar," jokes Jacob.

"That's not funny," says Clark.

"You're right," says Jacob. "I saw them live and was really offended."

What is it that makes The Faint stand out above everyone else?

"It's hard for us to answer that, I think we see it as, 'Why is your product better than other people's?' And we don't look at it as a product," contends Todd, seconds before toppling headlong into the classic rock'n'roll cliché. "We just try and make something we like and hope other people like it. You know, just do what you do and if people like it..."

He tails off, but it's too late. The damage is done. The Faint would like to change your life. The question is: will you let them?

"We try to create an artistic statement, which is why people should buy our album" Dapose

How swoon is now: The Faint (l-r): Jacob, Todd, Clark, Dapose and Joel. And (inset) Todd enjoys a worm. Nice

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GO TO *NME.COM* TO WATCH THE VIDEO TO THE FAINT'S SINGLE 'AGENDA SUICIDE' NOW

'WE'RE BETTER THAN COOL!'

They may have a reputation as retro stoners, but The Music don't care – as the Midwest of America warms to their charms, they could be the unlikely frontmen of a real rock revolution

Text: Stephen Dalton Photography: Dean Chalkley

Nobody has even heard of The Music in Columbus, Ohio. Curious pop kids cluster around their tourbus in the sub-zero back streets, but merely look baffled when one of West Yorkshire's premier acid-rock voyagers shambles past. Even the security guard on the stage door has to check the band off against a record company promotional flyer. Just another novice Brit-band heading for... what? Oblivion?

Get them onstage, though, and The Music make sure they will be remembered. Because here they summon up a pagan firestorm from the flaming moshpits of Valhalla. Rob Harvey, intense and possessed, howls and shudders like a volcano. Adam Nutter ignites his combustible guitar, hurling thunderbolts of superheated cosmic bluesadelia across the heads of a rapturous crowd. Columbus gets jiggy with it, open-mouthed. The new space captains of superheavy funk-rock have landed.

The Midwest is where Brit-rock hopefuls famously go down in flames, the entrenched middle kingdom where cocky mockney monkeys with trendy coastal followings are routinely broken like butterflies on a wheel. America's heartland has stoutly resisted almost every UK onslaught in recent years, from Blur to Robbie and all points in-between. And it's still early days for The Music, whose self-titled debut album is not even released here until February. But there is something raw and untamed about their electrifying live show, something way beyond fashion and hype that seems to hit these crowds at gut level. The Music connect.

"Shit gig," says bass player Stuart Coleman later.

Pardon?

"Probably the worst night we've had since we've been over here. Last time I played that bad was the Fuji Festival in Japan."

Talk about great expectations. The Music have played only a middling show by their own high-voltage standards, but still managed to blow hotly-hyped headliners The Vines offstage. Tomorrow night, they will do the same again in nearby Cincinnati. And in around six weeks, the other side of Christmas, they're sure to unleash even more fireworks on their biggest UK audiences yet, on the first notable rock'n'roll tour of 2003.

James, a 20-ish student type, tells *NME* The Music "fucking rock" and predicts they will be "bigger than Coldplay". Karen, a 40-something real estate agent and band manager, says: "I wish I had a million dollars to invest in these guys." Karen also loves Andrew WK, and later turns up in The Music's dressing room to sing their praises and steal their beers. Respect.

Chuck Swaney, the Midwest promotions director for the band's American label, Capitol, is also on hand for his first taste of cosmic Yorkshire rock. Although they are still an unknown quantity in the US, Chuck talks up the buzz around The Music.

"You get to feel they would just love to break America and kick its ass," he gushes, slipping into full-on Spinal Tap mode. "The Music are here very early – I've never had a band out working here this early, and that shows great dedication. You can just see it in their eyes, there's such an eagerness to learn. From how young they are *(drummer Phil Jordan is the oldest, at 20)*, I think they absolutely have the stamina. It's just whether they can do it night in and night out."

After the show, Chuck will quiz Rob about crowd reactions in other towns. "They've just been getting their fannies out and wafting them around," says Rob. Chuck looks puzzled. Rob grins. Mission accomplished.

But don't be fooled by their deadpan British humour. The Music spent the autumn months of 2002 touring America, on their own and supporting The Vines. From February, they are due to spend another four months on the road there, including a high-profile, MTV-backed tour with labelmates Coldplay. If they crack America it will be the old-fashioned way, with hard graft.

"We don't take drugs. Apart from smoking, but we don't see that as taking drugs, technically" Adam Nutter

"The best thing about us four is we can play live really well," says Adam with matter-of-fact bravado. "So it just makes sense to go around and play loads of gigs. It's what we do best, and it seems to be working. It's working in a lot of countries, not just over here."

The Music aren't cocky. They just have the confidence of ambitious young guttersnipes with the hunger to conquer continents. "The only time you don't crack America," says Rob sagely, "is when America cracks you."

Onstage, The Music rock like Rage Against Primal Zeppelin with bull elephant erections. In person, they could hardly be more different: soft-spoken northern souls with no mouthy manifesto beyond their songs and no pop-diva attitude besides hardcore positivity. Curly-locked supergonks in supermarket tracksuits, they are the men from uncool. Not hammers, but hamsters of the gods.

A full menu of debauched possibilities surrounds The Music on tour as a menagerie of sleazy characters, self-styled "porn models" and eager young things clamber aboard their tourbus in search of the rock'n'roll dream, 2002 style. The Kippax kids let it all wash past them, serene and unimpressed. During one aftershow party, *NME* finds Rob and Phil calmly composing reggae jams on a laptop mini-studio. Later, a riotous trio of grrrl-rockers will corner Phil and tell him he looks like Davy Jones, the sickly-cute Brit-sex pin-up from '60s boyband The Monkees. The drummer shrinks bashfully into his seat. He looks about 12.

The Music are full of such unorthodox, unstudied charm. They are the sort of band who arrive out of nowhere and prove that everything you complacently believed about rock, fashion, hair and the imminent death of youth culture is not just outdated but totally, hopelessly, gloriously wrong.

Maybe it's because they grew up in a semi-vacuum, unburdened by stifling scenes and faddish metropolitan cynicism. Perched on the suburban fringes of Leeds, Kippax is a former mining village, mostly working-class, glamour free. The kind of place people leave and never come back. "Lots of narrow-minded and judgmental people," says Rob, "who think they can look at someone and tell exactly what they are."

"And whether they should hit them or not," adds Phil.

The Music's story is as timeless as rock'n'roll and as current as a punch in the face. Small-town square pegs and part-time punchbags reinvent themselves as sky-shagging rock'n'soul thunderlords. Meek become heroes. No wonder the slings and arrows of rock criticism, good and bad, bounce off them like tinsel.

Dissenters dismiss the Kippax quartet as dope-addled, hopelessly provincial retro-runts from the arse end of 1973. Admittedly a mischievous *NME* news story, claiming that the band's album cost more in marijuana bills than studio costs, might have helped fuel this misapprehension. Devotees, meanwhile, proclaim the band's cosmic arse-thunder as the seismic soundtrack to an impending rock revolution. But The Music take triumph and disaster for the impostors they both are.

"Both bullshit," sniffs Rob.

"Both of them are wrong," barks Stuart.

"There will be slight elements to us that are retro," Adam concedes, "but it's sort of forward-thinking retro-ness, you know? As for the people who say we're the next big thing, it's kind of flattering, but I don't know. It's a really throwaway statement, but a throwaway statement that people place a lot on. *NME* said we were the most important band since Oasis or something, and that's just a journalist's opinion or whatever. But everyone seems to have taken to that and talked about it."

Actually, most commentators seem more interested in The Music's drug intake, especially their allegedly superhuman intake of what Rob calls "goatweed". But the band deny their über-stoner reputation and, after two days on the road with them, we must admit they don't appear any more spliff-dependent than the average trainee teacher or motorcycle courier.

"Maybe we were when we were a bit younger, but we're kind of focused a bit now," Phil shrugs. "We've got used to being able to do that and it's not so much of a big deal."

Adam nods. "It's like living in Holland, you know? It's always fucking great weed and you're like, 'So what?' That's the way it's become for us. We kind of got carried away at first and now the novelty is wearing off."

"A lot of the time, it is just made-up stupid fucking facts that stick to us," says Phil. "Like your lot made so much shit up about us smoking weed, like it cost more than the studio. What the fuck? We'd be dead! Everybody in the fucking world will read that."

"We don't even take drugs," insists Adam. Yeah, right.

"Apart from smoking, but we don't see that as taking drugs, technically I mean... we're not really around drugs. The only drugs we're around are weed and alcohol."

Come on, 'The Music' is the most lysergically freakadelic dude-where's-my-skins rock album since The Grateful Dead circa 1967 – or the Stone Roses circa 1994, at least. Take new single 'The Truth Is No Words'. You must have written at least *some* of it on acid?

"No," Adam shrugs. "I mean, some of our trippy songs like 'Human', that's quite trippy in a guitar sense, but I didn't even smoke weed when I wrote that guitar bit. And the rest of the songs on the album as well. 'Too High' is one of the trippier songs, I wasn't getting stoned then either."

Well, OK, so maybe The Music are on a natural high. And if anyone doesn't need drugs to see into other dimensions, it's Rob – he's already lighter than air, locked in permanent orbit around Planet Bong. "I haven't even smoked weed!" he beams, not too convincingly. "I had a bit, but I quit because it was making me feel sick. I don't take no more horny goatweed..."

Most bands boast about their chemical exploits – but those were the Old Ways from the Old Days. In the same way most bands are painfully, pathetically uptight about trying to appear cool, The Music are so heroically uncool they can't help being cool.

"We really don't understand cool," admits Phil.

"This is something that really puzzles us," says Adam.

"Music's not about being fucking cool, is it?" sniffs Stuart.

Which might explain why The Music dress in Happy Shopper bargain-bin sports gear and knitted woolly pom-pom

CONTINUES PAGE 28

LITERALLY SPEAKING

Ten other things that are precisely as advertised

The Sketch Show
Steve Coogan-backed, quick-fire TV humour

A Heartbreaking Work Of Staggering Genius
Wonderful novel by Dave Eggers

Cow Gum
Glue popular in the late-'70s, made of melted-down cows

Sock Shop
Popular footwear emporium

The Band
They certainly were – a six-piece, late-'60s/early-'70s combo who sometimes backed Bob Dylan

www.cheapflights.com
A website. On which you can buy cheap flights

ITV News At 10
It's on ITV, it's the news, and it's on at ten

The Lake District
District of northern England, full of, well, lakes

Sleep
1963 film by Andy Warhol, which consists of five or so hours of his friend John Giorno asleep. As you are also likely to be before long

Ronseal Quick Drying Woodstain
It does exactly what it says on the tin

Pest in the Midwest: (l-r) Stuart, Adam, Rob and Phil

FROM PAGE 26

hats that even Björk would think twice about wearing. Which could be taken for a brilliantly calculated anti-image, like Hoxton art-scum with their brain-damage haircuts and designer-tramp wankwear. But it's not. Fantastically, it's just them.

"It's just the fact that we're on the road all the time, we don't have a lot of space for clothes, and the clothes we do have get battered," Adam explains. "When free clothes are available it's always this sort of stuff, so we look like this because we do what we do. Even anti-fashion is fashion in a sense, I suppose, but we're not anti-fashion."

"We just, like, ignore it," says Stuart.

"We're just existing," adds Phil.

"It's got no fucking meaning to me," sneers Rob, suddenly animated. "You're cool when you don't give a fuck about what you look like, in whatever you feel comfortable in. That's cool. If you have to worry about being cool, you're not cool."

So if Rob turned up for the next gig dressed in a giant clown costume you'd all be OK with that?

"I think it would be hilarious," Adam deadpans.

"Yeah," Rob agrees, "but I wouldn't be able to play like that. It would be too funny. It's funny when someone just does something like that. I think *that* is cool."

The Music piss themselves laughing. And when *NME* asks them to rate themselves on a cool scale of one to ten, they rightly realise the coolest thing of all is to take the piss. Stuart says ten, Phil says a half, and Adam just snorts. "I don't know, I've never thought about it. Ask me after the show."

"You're cool when you don't give a fuck about what you look like"
Rob Harvey

And Rob? "I haven't got a fucking clue," he blurts. "I don't care. We're better than cool."

The Music are still young, pure and untainted enough to rewrite rock history from a Year Zero standpoint. They belong to a post-tribal generation, perhaps the first in Britain since pop music began, unchained from the old ideological turf wars of their parents and big brothers. The bands they namecheck as youthful passions come from all over the map: The Smashing Pumpkins, Portishead, Jane's Addiction, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Primal Scream, Van Morrison, Leftfield, The Coral, Fleetwood Mac, Daft Punk.

Rob, meanwhile, is a bit of a soulman on the sly. Al Green, Marvin Gaye and Curtis Mayfield were in his pantheon of greats long before Ian Brown, Kurt Cobain or Robert Plant. But he never tried to sound like any of them. "No, it were just... when you first start, it's not about that," Rob says. "It was about getting it out, for me. I wasn't trying to sound like anybody. Well, I used to want to sing like Michael Jackson but it were never going to happen."

Needless to say, Rob gave up on Jacko around his 1995 album 'HIStory', and is not impressed by the singer's recent baby-dangling stunt. "Anybody else would have had the baby taken off them," he scowls.

The youthquake of punk rock blew itself out before The Music were even born and it has barely registered on their radar. "It did on me, growing up," argues Adam. "For a brief period, a fleeting moment. The Clash and the English punk bands, and the Americans – Green Day for some reason were around a lot while we were growing up. I don't know why, all the skaters I suppose."

Acid house and rave culture, similarly, almost passed them by completely. "My brother's older mates, they were all into that," sniffs Phil. "They were like the cool kids, I hated them, catching the back end of whatever they were doing. Going to the Roses or The Chemical Brothers, the whole rave scene. I've never been to a rave myself but I grew up listening to some of it and then got into it a couple of years ago. I went through different phases, you know. But it's too dark, when you're listening to drum'n'bass every second of the day."

Britpop, the last big movement in homegrown guitar music, also left The Music cold. "Our brothers were heavily into Britpop," shrugs Stuart, "so again they got played a lot around where we were, so we got pulled into it almost. I mean our first gig was Shed Seven, in Leeds. We went with his brothers, just for a laugh."

Rob shivers. "I didn't really like it, though. I didn't like standing in the crowd, it just felt weird. I just kind of followed my brother, but then it became like, everywhere you looked, everyone was walking round with the same kind of hairdo and clothes..."

The singer's voice trails off in quiet disgust. Adam grins. "It's great when you first discover music because you listen to all sorts of different stuff," he nods, "and you suddenly decide it's all shit."

There is still something fantastically, refreshingly raw about The Music. They fizz and crackle with molten potential, like a continent waiting to be conquered. They still connect at gut level, still feel untamed. Maybe all we can realistically hope is that they stay this way, beyond fashion, better than cool.

But for some, they are already bigger than that, generational icons in the making. One early champion of The Music was former Factory Records boss Tony Wilson. He began hyping the band even before they were signed, predicting great things. "I think it was good for us," says Adam. "I developed quite a relationship with him, quite a lot of emails just talking about music and stuff, bullshitting – he's a cool guy."

"Tony Wilson knows about music, to be fair," Rob nods. "So if he likes us a lot of people will think we're worth checking out."

But Wilson went further than that. He claimed The Music proved his romantic, oft-aired theory about major youth revolutions occurring every 13 years or so, from Merseybeat to punk to acid house and beyond. After seeing The Music unleash thunderbolts across the Midwest, *NME* is forced to admit the pompous bastard might just have been right.

"I don't know about putting a year on it but that definitely happens all the time," nods Adam. "You've only got to look at history, there's upheavals all the time, and some are not as violent as others. Sometimes the violence really erupts – Nirvana, for instance. But other things kind of go on the underground, then suddenly they're making a difference and there'll be a lot of people out there knowing about it."

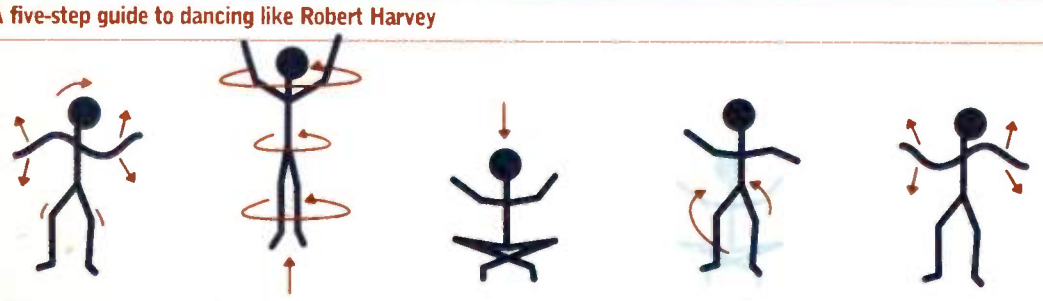
Does that mean The Music? Are you shaping up for a real rock revolution?

"Maybe," smiles Adam cryptically, like a man with secret knowledge just waiting to be tapped. "Like I say, there's definitely something going to happen."

Weak become heroes. The hamsters of the gods get ready to roar. The Music might still be taking the long road, but they're not walking it any more. They're running.

MAKE YOUR MOVE

A five-step guide to dancing like Robert Harvey



1 Waggle your arms about furiously in preparation for take-off. Throw back your head, give it your best pout and then bend your legs

2 Leap as high in the air as you can, while – and this is crucial – twisting around 360 degrees

3 Now it gets difficult. Having completed the full twist, drop to the floor with your legs crossed

4 Provided you haven't broken anything, push yourself off from the floor – yogic-flying style – until you're standing upright again

5 Waggle your arms about furiously for another 20 minutes

DO YOU WANT JAM ON IT?

The best bluesadelic freakouts ever!

Can – 'Mother Sky' (1970)
Fourteen-and-a-half minutes of frenzy, featuring avant-jazz licks and someone yelping in Japanese

Pink Floyd – 'Interstellar Overdrive' (1967)
Ten minutes of acid droning which makes you see bubble pictures on the inside of your eyelids

The Stone Roses – 'Breaking Into Heaven' (1994)
John Squire's most hairy-chested moment, this inordinately long track also featured jungle noises

The Verve – 'Life's An Ocean' (1995)
The high watermark of an intensely druggy period, this was a kaleidoscopic sonic exploration (maaan)

The Music – 'Disco' (2002)
Not disco, but seven minutes of hallucinatory guitars richocheting from speaker to speaker (double maaan)

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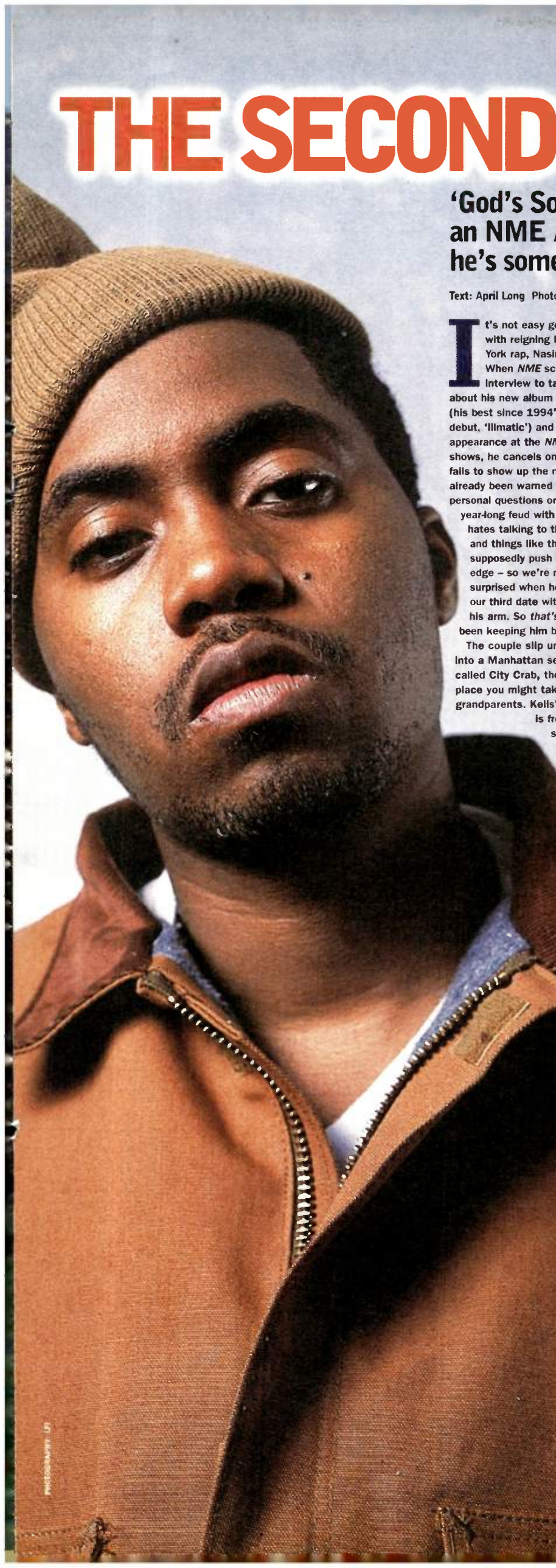
GO TO *NME.COM* TO WATCH THE VIDEO FOR THE MUSIC'S SINGLE, 'THE TRUTH IS NO WORDS' NOW!

THE SECOND COMING OF NAS

'God's Son' has returned with his best album since 'Illmatic' and an NME Awards show in February – though when we meet him, he's somewhat distracted by his new girlfriend Kelis

Text: April Long Photography: Pieter M Van Hattem



It's not easy getting time with reigning King of New York rap, Nasir Jones. When *NME* schedules an interview to talk to him about his new album 'God's Son' (his best since 1994's classic debut, 'Illmatic') and his imminent appearance at the *NME* Awards shows, he cancels one day then fails to show up the next. We've already been warned to not ask personal questions or about his year-long feud with Jay-Z – he hates talking to the press, and things like that can supposedly push him over the edge – so we're mildly surprised when he turns up to our third date with Kelis on his arm. So *that's* what's been keeping him busy...

The couple slip unrecognised into a Manhattan seafood joint called City Crab, the sort of place you might take your grandparents. Kelis's face is freshly scrubbed, her wild-coloured hair a thing of the past; Nas wears a black pullover and navy blue jacket and looks like couldn't possibly be old enough to drink (he's 32), much less have made six albums. They began romancing when Kelis added vocals to 'Hey Nas' on 'God's Son', and although they've been keeping the relationship under wraps, tonight it's spilling out over the table. She rolls up his sleeves for him so he won't get cocktail sauce on his cuffs; they order the same surf'n'turf meal (fish and chips, with a side of corn on the cob), then feed each other mouthfuls. Funny: when *NME* met Kelis two years ago she said she'd "given up" trying to find the right man, "because they're all fucking weirdos".

And, needless to say, Nas spends most of the following conversation with his face buried in Kelis' neck.

***NME*: So, you'll be playing an *NME* show in February...**

Nas: "Am I? Who's *NME*?"

Kelis: "Don't worry, I know who you are."

When were you last in England?

Nas: "I don't remember if I've ever been there."

Not a big traveller, then?

"I hate to fly. I don't like being interrogated and targeted in airplanes. It makes me uncomfortable when there's so many people watching me, treating me like I'm a suspicious character. If I have to go to LA, I just drive."

What's so special about 'God's Son'?

"It's the most personal record I ever made. I went through hard times last year. I lost my ma. It's all in there."

Why was the release date brough forward in the US?

"The streets couldn't wait. Tracks started getting bootlegged so we got it to come out on Friday instead of Tuesday. I love *('80s slasher flick) Friday The 13th*, and I thought that was cool to get it out that day. I'd rather people got to hear quality tracks."

Why's it called 'God's Son'?

"It's from a tattoo I've had on my stomach for about five years that says God's Son. I feel like God is the greatest – I've been through a lot and only God could get me through it. You know, I just want to represent that we're all God's children and I'm one of them."

Your daughter's name is Destiny. That makes her God's granddaughter.

"Uh, yeah. Guess so. She's eight. Real sassy."

What are some of your other nicknames?

"*(Laughs)* Oh, man. *(Nuzzles Kelis)* I'm her Boo Boo. I've been *(demented soul artist)* Rick James. A lot of people call me 'son', because I used to call everyone else 'son', like, 'What up, son?' My manager calls me Clark Kent because he saw me go through a lot and still be kicking ass. Oh, shit. The ladies used to call me Superman, before... *(squeezes Kelis' hand)* before my baby was around. Now I'm just her Boo Boo."

> **"The ladies used to call me Superman, before my baby was around. Now I'm just her Boo Boo"**

If you were Superman, what superpower would you want?

"Well, it'd have to be something to make life better. Like having healing powers to cure people's diseases and pain. Being invisible might be cool, too."

Then what would you do?

"Follow my girl. Sneak around, see what she gets up to... *(loses himself in Kelis' neck)*"

Why don't you smile in photos?

"Look inside my album cover. I smiled in there *(we check – he didn't)*. I don't normally smile in pictures, no. I don't know why."

If we gave you three wishes, what would they be?

"World peace. *(Excruciatingly long pause)* World peace. And world peace. I don't know what else."

Kelis: "What about personal peace, baby?"

Nas: "Yeah, OK, personal peace. And happiness for everybody. Are we done now?"

NAS VS JAY-Z

The lyrical highlights

"Youse the fag model for Kari Kani/Esco ads... Had a spark when you started but now you're just garbage" Jay-Z, 'Takeover', 2001

"'Cos the nigga wear a coofie, it don't mean that he bright/It just means you don't understand all the bullshit that he write" Jay-Z, 'Blueprint 2', 2002

"You a fan, a phony, a fake, a pussy, a Stan/I still whip your ass, you 36 in a karate class" Nas, 'Ether', 2001

"'The Gift And The Curse'? Fuck that shit, the first shall be last" Nas, 'Last Real Nigga Alive', 2002

GET YOUR CLICKS HERE!
GO TO *NME.COM* AND WATCH THE VIDEO FOR NAS' SINGLE 'MADE YOU LOOK' NOW

Love forever

In a world exclusive, Jack White of The White Stripes meets one of his heroes – legendary Love frontman Arthur Lee

Text: Pat Long/Jack White Photography: Michael Ochs Archives Redferns

As befits a man who once appeared in a promotional shot with a fag hanging out of his ear, Arthur Lee has inspired some of rock's most evergreen rumours. That he spent the whole of 1967 tripping. That he used to walk around his hometown, LA, with one shoe on. That he walked offstage during a gig and wasn't seen again for two years. That he nodded out on heroin and burnt all his hair off. And – most incredibly – that he and a bandmate killed their road manager.

But the rumours are only part of it. It was with the most ill-fittingly named band in history that Lee made his name. Love were acid-crazed street punks who claimed to have met in a gang fight and whose original line-up recorded three albums that mixed schizoid garage snarling with lilting folk-pop and jazz-rock. It's for Love's creative high-water mark 'Forever Changes' that Lee is best known. Its lush, symphonic psychedelia and Hispanic-tinged acoustic laments have exerted a powerful, exotic pull in the years since it came out in 1967, with people like Primal Scream, Badly Drawn Boy and the cosmic Scouse brigade paying tribute.

Lee arrives in Britain this week for a tour where he'll be playing 'Forever Changes' in its entirety – with a full orchestra – as part of a new burst of energy that he's been burning off since he was released from prison in 2001 after serving almost six years for gun possession. Today, Arthur's supposed to acknowledge the new guard by answering questions from fan Jack White. What transpires, however, is something else. Lee proves to be utterly disinterested in talking about his past. And like a one-man *You Cock!* he savages the rock aristocracy and, well, pretty much *everyone*.

"The White Stripes?" he huffs. "I don't know who they are. I don't listen to rock music. Most of that stuff sounds like something I started ages ago. It sounds like they're playing their grandfathers' music. They're not saying anything. There's no message."

Love? No chance.

Jack White: When Love covered (Jimi Hendrix's) 'Hey Joe', was it just because that was the cool song at the time, or because it meant something personal to you?
Arthur Lee: "*(Sighs)* I don't know. It wasn't my idea to cover that song. Listen, I don't care about that shit. I'm tired of playing that old stuff. I wish people'd put the '60s out of their minds. What I want to do right now is make the greatest album that I can possibly make and to put on the greatest show that people will ever see. I'm taking my music somewhere else. In fact, I'm so bold as to say I'm going to put 'Forever Changes' out of people's minds with this new album I have. It's the best rock album there's *ever* going to be."

How do you want to be perceived right now?
"I think I'm the best one of them all. I think Mick Jagger stinks. Brian Wilson stinks, too. They just don't have that punch. Don't get me wrong: Mick Jagger was a great influence in my life. He was a free spirit. But now he just doesn't have his noggin on straight. You have to protect your noggin."

Love's influence is very important but it's never written as such. What is Love's place in musical history to you?
"*(Ignoring the question completely)* Mick and Brian Wilson should give it up. They should go home and take care of some of their kids. The Beatle guy, too. Paul McCarthy *(sic)*. He should pack it up. He's there singing *"yesterdayyyyyy"*. Yesterday? I'm talking about right now! I've seen their shows recently and they stink. They're just wasting people's time and money now. The people that come and see me play get their money's worth and they get an education, too. I've still got it and I'm 57 years old. I creep into people's hearts and their minds. And once I've got your mind, your mind's on my mind... and your mind and we belong together."

Did being black hinder your musical career in the '60s?
"Let me tell you something: I'm the one who kicked the fucking door in. I'm the one who opened the door for everybody: Bootsy Collins and Jimi Hendrix and all those folks. But Jimi was like my heart. The guy stole my look, but he was about the best guitar player I've ever heard."

Your second album, 'Da Capo' spent a lot of time on my turntable. '7 And 7 Is' is an anthem for the ages...
"*(Interrupts)* That's because I was *saying* something. '7 And 7 Is' was the first punk song, too. I invented punk. And I've still got it – I have yet to peak. It's my time to shine right now. I'm going to put on a show that's going to be dynamite. I'm tall talking, but it's true. When I get offstage my underwear is sweating. When do you see a show that Mick Jagger puts on when his fucking socks are sweating? When I come offstage my underwear is wet. I'm wet from head to toe."

***NME*: Finally, how do you feel about the acclaim you're receiving from bands like The White Stripes?**
"I don't hang out with musicians any more for one reason: they're nuts. And it might be catching. I'm the biggest fucking nut of them all *(laughs uncontrollably)*. Plus, I don't listen to this rubbish that they call rock music any more. I don't listen to that crap. Because there's just nobody that can touch me."

All you need is Love: Arthur Lee (centre) with his '60s line-up and (above right) how he looks now

"I don't hang out with musicians any more for one reason: they're nuts. And it might be catching!"

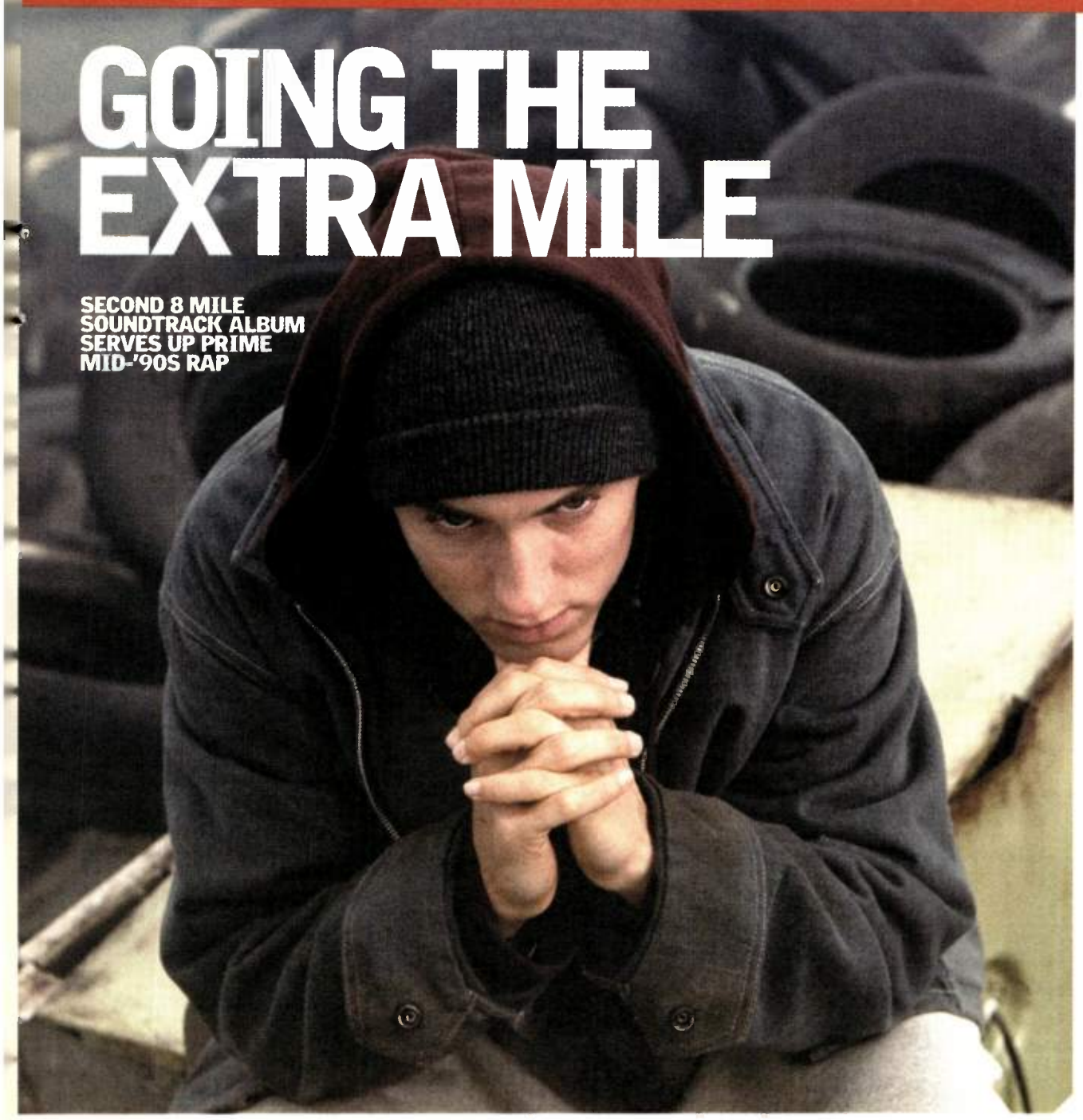
GET YOUR CLICKS HERE!
GO TO NME.COM TO HEAR 'ALONEAGAINOR' FROM LOVE'S MASTERPIECE 'FOREVER CHANGES' NOW

THE NME CRITICS ALBUMS

THIS WEEK'S BIGGEST ALBUMS FACE BRITAIN'S MOST OPINIONATED WRITERS

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

SECOND 8 MILE SOUNDTRACK ALBUM SERVES UP PRIME MID-'90S RAP



VARIOUS
More Music From 8 Mile

(INTERSCOPE)

Though this cover rather cheekily boasts a tasty mug shot of Eminem, this isn't an Eminem album. Instead, 'More Music From *8 Mile*' is the second soundtrack album from what will surely be one of the movies of 2003.

Since the film is set in the mid-'90s, it's a collection of the sounds when Eminem (and the film's semi-autobiographical Jimmy 'Rabbit' Smith Jr) was ricocheting from one demeaning job to another, just beginning to make his way on the mic.

This was a time when Biggie and Tupac (both here) strode the hip-hop world, representing the East and West Coasts respectively, Puff Daddy was a behind-the-scenes producer and the Wu-Tang Clan hadn't released 5,684 albums between them.

As an introduction to the mid-'90s scene with a focus on the all-conquering gangsta rap, 'More Music...' is peerless. These tracks provided inspiration to the emerging hip-hop talents; from the spine-chilling twisted paranoia of Mobb Deep's 'Shook Ones Pt II', to Naughty By Nature's intoxicatingly buoyant 'Feel Me Flow', which is the aural equivalent of arriving at the coolest party in the world as the free champagne arrives.

As the '90s progressed, rap was dabbling in jazzy flourishes (MC Breed Featuring Tupac' – 'Gotta Get Mine') and reassembling the keyboards and slap bass of the '80s into fresh new masterpieces such as Biggie's 'Juicy'. Into this landscape in 1993 strode the Wu-Tang Clan, who revolutionised the genre with a sound driven by off-kilter eerie horror backings that was arguably darker even than gangsta rap. That almost a third of 'More Music...' is Wu-Tang Clan-related illustrates how much energy they brought to the scene.

Standout tracks here include the gloriously nonsense wah-wah sing-along of Ol' Dirty Bastard's 'Shimmy Shimmy Ya'; the claustrophobic love of Method Man and Mary J Blige's update of the Motown soul classic 'You're All I Need To Get By' that hints at a deadlier obsession, and OutKast's Southern-fried 'Player's Ball', serving as a reminder that they were enormous Stateside long before 'Ms Jackson'.

What's notable about 'More Music...' is how many of the tracks are still common currency – Biggie's vocal on 'Juicy' found itself weaved seamlessly into Jay-Z's 'A Dream', while Method Man's confrontational 'Bring Da Pain' has been recently revisited by Missy Elliott.

Delivering far more than you've any right to expect of a *second* soundtrack album, 'More Music...' is a surplus of riches; a cool education in mid-'90s hip-hop and an intriguing examination of the roots of Eminem.

Anthony Thornton **9**

FIVE GREAT ALBUMS FROM RAP'S GOLDEN ERA

Mobb Deep 'The Infamous Mobb Deep' (LANDSPEED)

With a stark, grinding description of New York, the Queensbridge rappers' second album contains some of the most infectious and grim gangsta rap ever.

Wu-Tang Clan 'Enter The Wu-Tang' LOUD/RCA)

Crammed with kung fu imagery and lean, menacing and innovative music, this album was the blueprint for the Staten Island collective's future careers and one of hip-hop's most influential records.

Notorious BIG 'Ready To Die' (ARISTA)

Biggie's debut album arrived from nowhere in 1994 and invigorated the East Coast with the gangsta themes of money, champagne and, of course, death. Ironically, it was to be his only release before his murder.

2Pac 'Me Against The World' (JIVE)

Although his masterpiece 'All Eyez On Me' would appear a year later in 1996, this album most effectively illustrates the two sides of Tupac: the LA gangsta rapper (it opens with a commentary on the '94 shooting he survived) and the side striving for moral righteousness.

OutKast 'Southern-playalisticadillacmuzik'
(ARISTA)

OutKast's Dre and Big Boi brought rap with a refreshing dose of Deep South surrealism, psychedelic and oddball humour to a scene dominated by gangsta rap. With personality to spare, they were on a mission to be funky. No-one sounded quite like them in 1994.

CRACK: WE ARE ROCK
Silent Fantasy

(TIGERBEAT6)

Grotesquely good electrotrash

If Chicks On Speed were into black metal and fetish clubs, they'd be Crack: We Are Rock (WAR, get it?) – a two-grrl, two boy synth outfit, with an apocalyptic cabaret vision featuring prostitutes, amputees and amputee prostitutes.

This debut mini-album forsakes the usual Tigerbeat6 type laptop experimentica, for a stark electro sound where the boys handle the instrumentation – filthy sheets of distorted synth, gabba bass-beats – and the girls chant blankly over the top. A post-punk nightmare of twisted technology, for those who love to be treated bad this is a kinky must.

Louis Pattison **8**

VARIOUS
Clubbers Guide 2003

(MINISTRY OF SOUND)

Über wally house in one handy throwaway collection

While 2002 wasn't exactly a vintage year for house music (even Ibiza was 'choon'-less), out there in shirt'n'shoes Ritzy-land, the synth-heavy Euro-pop that makes up much of 'Clubbers Guide...' is selling by the lorry-load.

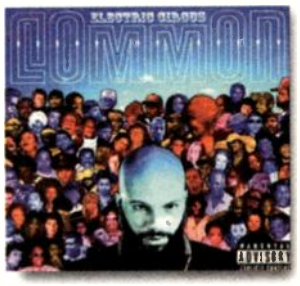
OK, the very fact that an über-pumping remix of Phat's & Small's office party fave 'Turn Around' makes an appearance should be enough to tell you that here is some of the most uncool music *ever*. Yet while DJ Sammy and his technicolour cohorts could wilt a Hoxton mullet at 50 paces, it does make you yearn for a time when mainstream dance music and melody were more than passing acquaintances. Love it or despise it, as long as there are fans of glo-sticks gobbling the ecstasy, there's no use fighting it.

John Hall **3**

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

CHICAGO RAPPER UNLEASHES A STAR GUEST-FILLED, BOUNDARY-PUSHING CLASSIC

COMMON
Electric Circus
(MCA)



In late-'60s America, civil rights struggles and demonstrations against the Vietnam war gave birth to heavy psychedelia and searing soul music. In turn, 2002 finds the threats of urban US social meltdowns and George W Bush's War Against Terror producing responses from hardcore hip-hop and rock'n'roll.

What does this have to do with Common, premier Chicago rapper, all-round bohemian beatnik and current squire to Erykah Badu? Well, he's just made the weirdest hip-hop album in recent memory, a suite of songs that take in soul, psychedelia, techno, hip-hop and avant-garde experimentation – and perfectly reflect these scarily troubled times.

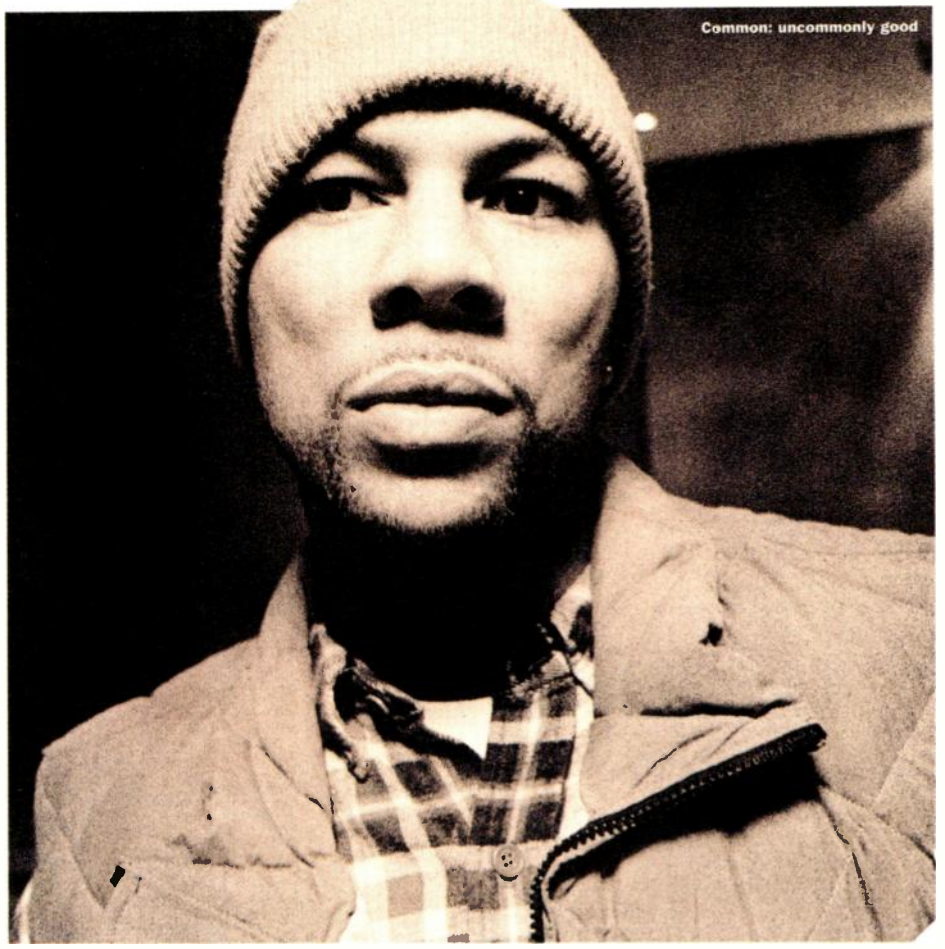
'Electric Circus' acts like a musical prism that looks different, depending on what angle it's viewed from. It takes some time to reveal its pleasures, but anyone who perseveres will be rewarded. The Common of 'One Day It'll All Make Sense' and the soulfully unconventional 'Like Water For Chocolate' can mainly be found here in lyrical imagery and in the grain of his familiar voice; musically, all bets are off.

Wonder how? Notice the way 'New Wave' features Laetitia Sadier from Stereolab. And, if that's not enough, how about 'Electric Wire Hustler Flower' being powered by a monster riff by POD's Sonny?

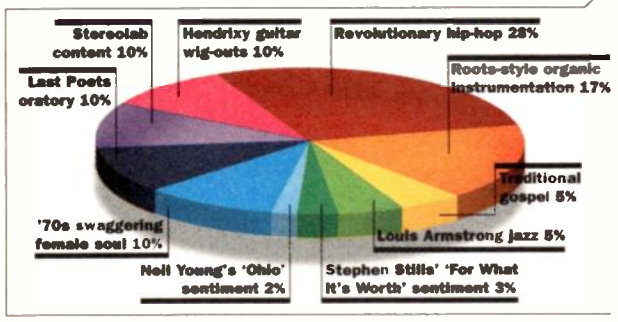
And yet again, the most striking aspect here has gotta be the way guests like Mary J Blige, Omar, Bilal, Cee-Lo, Pharrell Williams, The Roots' ?uestlove and Jill Scott also go way off the beaten track. From the African ancestor worship rituals of 'Ferris Wheel' to the closing haunted gospelisms of 'Heaven Somewhere', the main impression is Common's bravery as an artist. Tastes weaned on funk samples, lyrical shoot-'em-ups and brand name shout-outs to Gucci, Cristal champagne and Versace might find 'Electric Circus' difficult to stomach, but, hey, that's their loss.

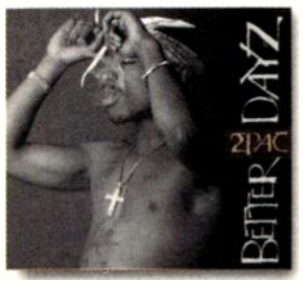
Where else would you find 'I Am Music' bringing back '20s vaudeville jazz, or 'Jimi Was A Rock Star' asking Jimi Hendrix to come back and set his people free? Common has just gone way, way off the hip-hop map. **8**

Dele Fadele


Common: uncommonly good

THIS ALBUM WAS MADE FROM...


Stereolab content 10%
Hendrixy guitar wig-outs 10%
Revolutionary hip-hop 28%
Roots-style organic instrumentation 17%
Last Poets oratory 10%
Traditional gospel 5%
'70s swaggering female soul 10%
Louis Armstrong jazz 5%
Neil Young's 'Ohio' sentiment 2%
Stephen Stills' 'For What It's Worth' sentiment 3%



2PAC
Better Dayz
(INTERSCOPE)

Yet more material from the murdered rap superstar

Tupac has now made almost as many albums since 1996 as Jay-Z and, according to the inner sleeve, has engagements booked until the beginning of 2004. Nothing in his life was certain, but in his death Tupac shifts units in the most reliable way possible. A shame then, that though his status should be undiminished (a quick recap: Tupac never had the greatest flow and was an often sentimental lyricist, but his bad boy charisma was huge, and this still appeals), his music should have dated so badly. Musically souped up though 'Better Dayz' is, straight-up, on the block, bitches-and-niggas Thug Life rapping like 'Fuck Em All' can't help but sound very dated indeed.

Time, basically, has moved on. A luxury not afforded Tupac, unfortunately. **4**

John Robinson

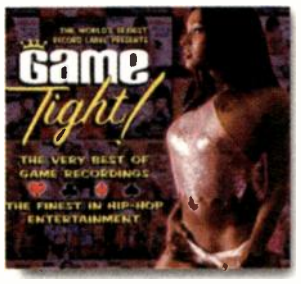
VARIOUS
Serie Noire: Dark Pop + New Beat (ESKIMO)

Introducing dark pop!

It's a bit of a grey area, dark pop: a shifting, desolate space between Italo-disco, electro, punk-funk, death-disco, art-rock and synth-pop. But there's no denying that dark pop has delivered some of the past year's best moments.

'Serie Noire' heads back to the early-'80s roots of the sound. Section 25 (industrial punk-funk) and Kissing The Pink (am-dram synth-pop) may prompt a flicker of recognition, but otherwise it's very obscure, and frequently great; particularly The Pool's stark synths/tribal drums mix, A Split Second's grizzled proto-electro and Executive Slacks' barmy art-noise. The inclusion of early-'90s house anthem 'Funkatarium' is rather odd, and '70s prog-rockers The Alan Parsons Project are an unwelcome addition, but, otherwise, if you're after new thrills this could be for you. **7**

Tony Naylor



VARIOUS
Game Tight! The Very Best Of Game Recordings
(LANDSPEED RECORDS)

Eminem-starring underground rap label compiled

The world is not exactly starved of new Eminem products right now, but should you really want all the inventive stories about killing people you can get your hands on, check out 'Game Tight!' – a rolling mix of 12-inches from the underground American rap imprint of the same name.

The essential track here is 'Nuttin' To Do' by Bad Meets Evil – that's Marshall and Detroit compadre Royce Da 5'9" – a sharp digital funk cut which finds the pair in fine sociopathic fettle. Blu Warta and Lord Digga hang around sounding mean, but it's Shady Records signing 50 Cent with 'Hit 'Em Up' who is revelatory. It's not enough for Eminem to dramatise the past with *8 Mile*; he's busy unleashing the future. **7**

Louis Pattison

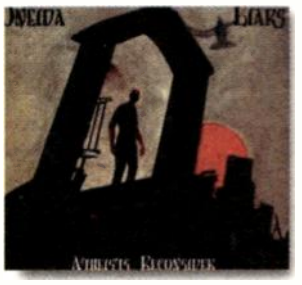
METAMATICS
Rewired In My Manor
(HYDROGEN DUKEBOX)

Warp-ish recluse remixed by online mates

A prolific electronicist living in the Devon countryside, Lee Norris communicates mainly through the internet. Under his Metamatics alias, he emailed a track called 'Pod' to a phalanx of fellow online nerds and unknowns (the best-known names on here are Dutch whizzkid Kettel and Tigerbeat6 types Stars As Eyes). It's a mixed selection: Verbose, Bauri and others burble pleasantly enough, but Metamatics does perfectly good Warp-type gear himself, so rejigging him in his own image is rather superfluous.

The best rewirers here drift off the template altogether: Sabi's 'Scene When The Train Leaves' is a dark symphony of edgy glitches and meatlocker ambience, and Kero's 'Shit Pod It's Hot' packs hefty acid muscle. Overall, though, a little disposable. **6**

Noel Gardner



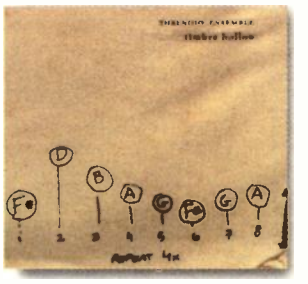
ONEIDA/LIARS
Atheists, Reconsider
(ARENAROCK)

Classy battle of the bands from the new wave of New York

On which two of New York's more 'wayward' bands club together to forge an album of ear-searing art-noise. Basically it's the wiggy lumberjack psychedelia of Oneida versus Liars' punk-funk sleaze. In other words, the sound of a million Williamsburg loft parties.

On this six-tracker, each band covers one of the other group's songs, which is a sweet gesture of solidarity. Oneida's nervy 'Fantastic Morgue' is worth the price of admission alone, although it's hard to resist the temptations of Liars' gamelan-flavoured 'Dorothy Taps The Toe Of The Tinman' – which sounds like one of those mad hobos who live underground in New York subway tunnels banging tin cups against the metal plate in their skulls. For eight minutes. Not for the faint-hearted, then. **6**

Pat Long



THRENODY ENSEMBLE
Timbre Hollow
(ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES)

Neo-classical folk from North Carolina. Party on!

You know you've wandered too far into the post-rock hinterland when the first minute of a track consists of two guys tuning up their acoustic guitars. Were a dog to start howling and the recording be interrupted by a mate sticking their head round the door to ask if anyone fancies a brew, you wouldn't be hugely surprised.

Instead, though, the North Carolina collective slowly pull together these initially aimless meanderings into a neo-classical melody with a stark, poignant beauty. There are hints of post-rock legends Slint, moments when this could be Sigur Rós taken back to the dark ages, even the odd touch of fractured chamber music. It occasionally lacks an affecting emotional core, but this is intelligent, sumptuous music nonetheless. **8**

Ian Watson

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB HANN

THE NME CRITICS SINGLES

Mark Beaumont, Peter Robinson, Leonie Cooper, Imran Ahmed, Christian Ward

ALL SINGLES REVIEWED ARE RELEASED MONDAY JANUARY 13, 2003

PANJABI MC
Mundian To Bach Ke (INSTANT KARMA)

1ST NME REVIEW

Bhangra-bashment-bling isn't a style you come across that often; but by god, when you do, seize it with both hands. For the past four years, 'Mundian To Bach Ke', the underground legend made by Coventry DJ Rajinder Rai, has been spun in clubs by everyone from Tim Westwood to Trevor Jackson to Pete Tong and has firmly cemented its crossover status in the process. Lifted from PMC's fourth album 'Legalised' – the biggest-selling bhangra album ever – translated its title is 'Beware Of The Boys' and it's a plinky, boingy *Knight Rider*-sampling drop-fest. Tell Lloyd-Webber this is what real *Bombay Dreams* are made of and dare not to dance. ***(LC)***

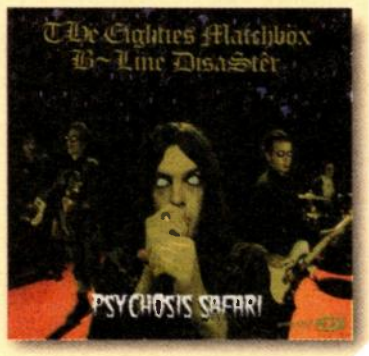
MINUTEMAN
Big Boy (IGNITION)

Following Big Ron Atkinson's visit to *NME* HQ last month, our fixation with TV football coverage continues with Minuteman's new single 'Big Boy' – the first 15 seconds of which is featured weekly on ITV's *The Premiership*. Despite the record company piffle that 'Big Boy' is being released "due to public demand" (other demands didn't include... The Mull Historical Society re-release 'Watching Xanadu' in a DVD trilogy holographic box-set), the sole bit of the song they use is the fiddly fretwork in the first 15 seconds – that's before it turns into the expected indie-standard drivel. Doesn't that make Minuteman main man Matt Jones the quarter-of-a-Minuteman then? Just a thought. ***(IA)***

SINGLE OF THE WEEK

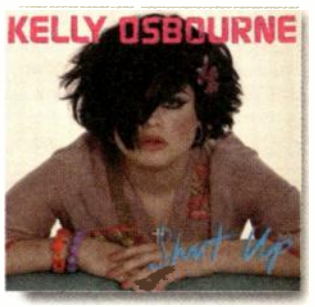
THE EIGHTIES MATCHBOX B-LINE DISASTER
Psychosis Safari (NO DEATH)

'Psychosis Safari' is the kind of record Andrew WK would make if he ditched all his white clothes for petrol black outfits and took up paganism. It's the sound of The Cooper Temple Clause dressing up as The Addams Family and covering Bobby 'Boris' Pickett's 1962 Halloween anthem 'Monster Mash'. And depending on which way you read the following lyrics – *"I got my limbs tied up/My heart's in my mouth/My mind's in a furry cup"* – it's a hugely disturbing peek into the mind of TEMBD frontman Guy McKnight or a police statement made by Jamie Theakston. A brilliantly stupid indie-rock horror show. ***(IA)***



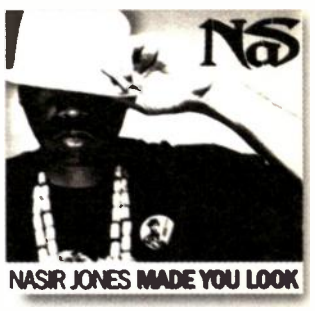
KELLY OSBOURNE
Shut Up (EPIC)

Lil' Miss Osbourne is something of a pop culture dilemma. Do we like her because she's a retro, larger than life, foul-mouthed diva with good shoes? Or do we hate her 'cos she's a spoilt, famous for being famous brat? Comin' atcha from the same suburban riot grrrl car park as Avril Lavigne and Pink, Kelly O squeals like a petulant *Mini Pops* Siouxsie Sioux fronting Green Day, or Kenickie getting messy with the Foo Fighters. In doing so, she miraculously finds her way into the wallets of thousands of young impressionable girls in Nirvana hoodies and biiig shorts. Conclusion? Like her 'cos she's not Avril Lavigne (and has good shoes). Not because of this song. ***(LC)***



NAS
Made You Look (COLUMBIA)

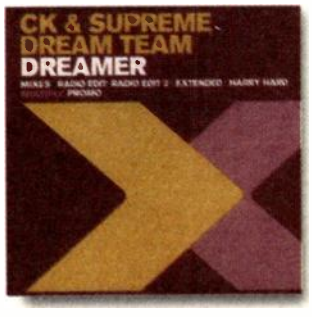
It's amazing what a touch of 'cock' can do for a floundering rapper's career. Nas (real name Nasir Jones) and Jay-Z's long running feud has entered *You Cock!* folklore for its bitterness and longevity. Most importantly, the end result is that it's forced each man to up not just the quantity, but the quality of their output. The Jay-Z baiting 'Made You Look' is another dazzling hip-hop moment. The first track to be released from Nas' new 'God's Son' LP (like Jay-Z, his second LP in a year) is perhaps his finest single to date. 'Made You Look' shimmers underneath old-skool bongo breaks, breaking glass and Nas' biting, breathless flow. Cock on! ***(IA)***



CK & SUPREME DREAM TEAM
Dreamer (MULTIPLY)

1ST REVIEW

If you weren't a smarmy talent show prick or a lady with no clothes on, only one thing could guarantee you a traffic-stopping hit in 2002. Supertramp. No shit. Since Scooter's Nietzschian re-working of 'The Logical Song', beardy gabba-prog-jazz has been the hottest sound in the superclubs literally *minutes* before the bulldozers move in. Here some faceless Dutch tat-merchants nab Ver Tramp's ace 1974 plinker 'Dreamer' and introduce frenzied bouts of Ibizan mentalism after each verse with the battle cry *"BRING THE NOIZZEE!!!"* Picture 100,000 very startled hippies on the Champs Elysee in 1979 dropping their spliff mats and trying to 'make boxes'. And they wonder why dance music is dying on its arse. Sheesh. ***(MB)***

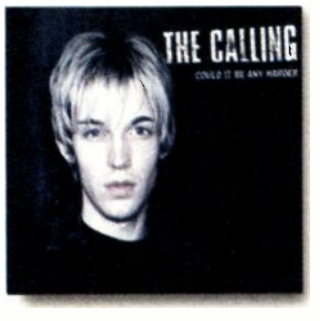


MORE FIRE CREW
Back Then (GO BEAT)

"Let me tell you how it was back then/No dough no hos no flow back then". Is this the same as 'Back In The Day' by Asher D? Well, yes it is, a tale of life on the streets before fame took hold – if inventing one of 2002's most ace catchphrases (*"Oi!"*) constitutes fame. Which it does. But this Crew live in the same world as So Solid and any other garage act you care to mention. Imagine: in 20 years, street-based pop music will have evolved so that being skint and nicking a car is the new falling in love, and the winner of *Pop Idol 22* will release a song called 'Hotwire My Heart'. But for now, if the beats are as chunky as this, More Fire Crew can stand against the best of them. ***(PR)***

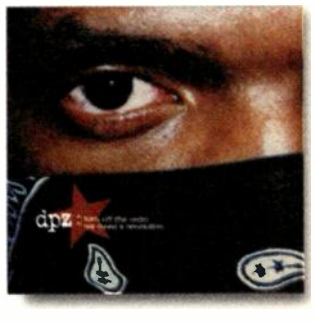
THE CALLING
Could It Be Any Harder (RCA/BMG)

Woof, eh madam? *NME* approaches this record fully engorged, expecting an erectoclash throbathon about stonking great cocks, featuring Miss Kittin robotically promising to do sex with us later on. Turns out this could wilt Ron Jeremy's wood in under a second, being whingeing LA Nickelrock with the consistency of week-old blancmange and the excitement factor of *Fame Academy Uncut*. It's like Busted if they'd *started off* as a grunge band. We fed '...Harder' into *NME*'s all-knowing superbrain Critic Computer (imagine HAL out of *2001: A Space Odyssey* if it'd been in a failed indie band in 1992) and it conclusively stated that The Calling are 'the shittest band that have ever lived' before self-destructing. ***(MB)***



DPZ
Turn Off The Radio (FULL CLIP)

As Public Enemy so sagely told us, watching Channel Zero is not good for the soul. Now their humble spiritual nephews Dead Prez – or DPZ as they're calling themselves these days, in anticipation of Dubya Bush's assassination – have extended this warning to the horrors of commercial radio. And who can blame them? For a group influenced by the Black Panthers, it's refreshing that their politics aren't rammed down your throat but fed to you insidiously in this banquet of a song. *"Turn off that bullshit!"* they holler over hard hip-rock peppered with whooped war cries and razor-sharp flows. Don't be fooled by the tight rhymes that they got, though; Dead Prez are most definitely still from the block. ***(LC)***



GUS GUS
David (UNDERWATER RECORDS)

Gus Gus' experiments in the hinterland between rock and dance may have only been sporadically successful, but this proves the righteousness of their mission. It is, in many ways, an orthodox progressive house odyssey, but GG queer the pitch by bringing melodies, textures and pop sensibilities into play which are akin to New Order and Primal Scream. Like either of those two, remixed by, say, Fluke, 'David' surges along on a deep, throbbing wave of synths, flecked with a lovely vocal. Off-kilter winner of the week. ***(TN)***

ROSIE RIBBONS
Little Bit (TELSTAR)

1ST REVIEW

As anybody who has ever witnessed a dog regurgitating a box of Bounce fabric softner will attest, the glutinous, yellow glob it produces is an intriguing artefact. A living creature has obviously been involved in its creation, yet its scent and consistency appear utterly synthetic. Enter *Pop Idol* loser Rosie Ribbons, whose second single (it follows 'Blink' – you missed it) comes replete with obnoxious jazz licks and an utterly plastic 'live' sound. Her album's full of ace '80s electro stuff but this is just a waste of space. ***(PR)***

MELATON
Still Water (S2)

'An internet-only release' this, which is the new 'send a cheque for £1.98 to Gavin, The Boxroom, 28 Over-Privileged Crescent, Altrincham, Cheshire'. And, frankly, the internet is fucking welcome to it as Melaton sound like David Gray being castrated with garden shears. Which is magnificent on pay-per-view but one almighty rancid cock wart of a record. Worse still, the B-side goes on about needing *"a sermon on the mount"*. Mater, those blasted Christians are on the grounds again! Yes, the AK47 I think. AK-AK-AK-AKKK!!! ***(MB)***

SANCHO PANZA
Ball O'String/Nuts In May
(SUPERGLIDER)

1ST REVIEW

Everything about this – the debut wibblings from south coast three-piece Sancho Panza – from the hand-painted limited-to-500 copies to the hand-scrawled press release screams 'sweet' and 'lo-fi'. Albeit at a barely audible level. 'Ball O'String' is the kind of softie-fest that keeps Belle & Sebastian in high quality knitwear, while B-side 'Nuts In May' is baroque-folkie Nick Drake strumming The Beta Band. Ah, I can remember when it was all under-achieving indie around here... ***(IA)***

O-TOWN
These Are The Days (BMG)

Ignore this song, for it be rubbish boyband-goes-indie in extremis, and turn your attentions instead to O-Town's commercially disastrous second album, '2'. Von Bondies fans may wish to look away now, but it's a cracker! There's an absolute banger featuring Nelly doing his thing over a guitar-driven dancefloor epic, another one called 'The Joint', with scratches and nonsense all over the place, and even an 'interpretation' of Wham!'s 'Careless Whisper'. But skip track two. It's this one. ***(PR)***

WHO DA FUNK? FEAT TERRA DEVA
Sting Me Red (You Think You're So Clever) (CREAM)

1ST REVIEW

You know we're living in strange times when dance music sounds quaint next to the barrage of boys with guitars. Such was 2002, clubland's *annus shittius*, where 4/4 was buried by garage rock foursomes. So let's kick off 2003 with a record that fuses the two factions. 'Sting Me Red' is a glorious pile-up of massive Moroder riffs underpinning a bitchy punk vocal. It's Siouxsiespooner. Nice. ***(CW)***

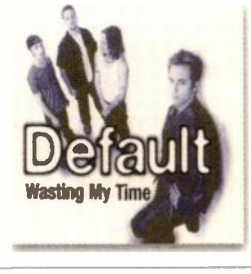
ERICK SERMON FEAT REDMAN
React (J RECORDS)

In the vein of Missy Elliott's 'Get Ur Freak On' and, erm, Holly Valance's 'Kiss Kiss', comes another Bollywood-influenced pop moment. This time Erick Sermon – formerly half of hip-hop duo EPMD but more recently the focus of a 'did he? didn't he?' suicide attempt – is responsible. Redman (fast becoming the Mutley of hip-hop with his idiotic woofing) cameos, presumably trying to reclaim credibility after appearing in Christina Aguilera's 'Dirrty' smut-fest. This is still spicy stuff, but in a far easier to digest way. ***(IA)***

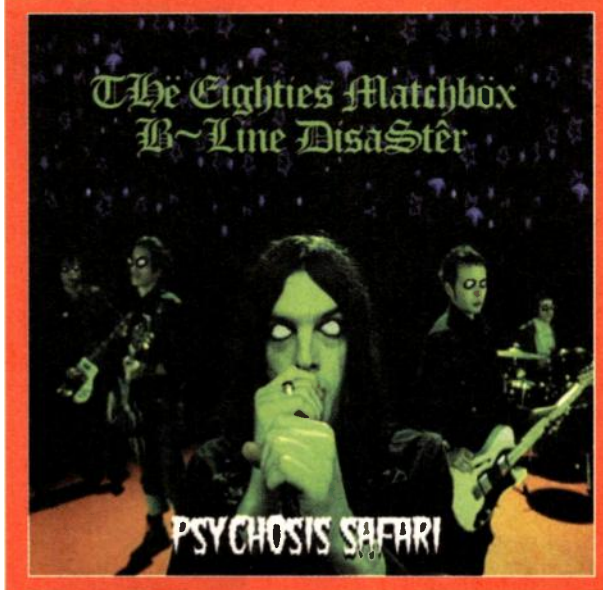
DEFAULT
Wasting My Time (TVT RECORDS)

1ST REVIEW

If, in 1,000 years' time, they need any evidence as to why US guitar music sucked in '03, this will be the Holy Grail. 'Wasting My Time' is a vile rockin' country requiem that you'd willingly dive into a Limp Bizkit moshpit to get away from. A 'bonus' acoustic version shows us Default's puddle-deep side and, when you're thinking it couldn't get any worse, there's 'Blind', a song co-written by the Jesus of middle management rock, Chad Kroeger. Wasting my time? You don't know the half of it. ***(LC)***



VIRGIN LOVES



The Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster
Psychosis Safari

CD Single Out Now

Foo Fighters
Times Like These

Single Out Now

CHEZERE
The Core (OLIVE)

Chezere used to sing with '90s acid jazz wank monsters Urban Species, but has since turned into a wondrous diva who specialises in the kind of foreplay funk beloved of those who remember hearing 'Your Love' for the first time back in '86. 'The Core' isn't a patch on her classic 'Where Does Your Love Go?', but it's nonetheless a slinky gem, all French disco bass and sultry piano tinkles. Plus it's produced by Max & Brian, the men behind 2002's ace dance record, 'Dancin' & Romancin'', which helps. ***(CW)***

SLUDGEFEAST
Born Evil (MUST... DESTROY)

A band named after last year's *NME* Christmas lunch and declared the "worst band in Bournemouth" by the *Bournemouth Evening Echo* (really, they should know), Sludgefeast make music that resembles the piss-yellow glob of blood and mucus you find in your handkerchief after a night snorting industrial detergent you've bought as 'cocaine'. Grotty metal played on instruments carved from lumps of evil and 'sung' inside Al Jourgensen's intestines then, and instantly smashed by *NME*. But while it lived, it *rocked*. ***(MB)***

PEST
Jefferson Shuffle (NINJA TUNE)

We don't know anything about Pest because their press release is just a list of annoying 'descriptions' of their music like, "Imagine that Abba had got into acid and group masturbation". We imagined that, got extremely excited ('Wanking Me, Wanking You'? 'Take A Jizz On Me'?) and then put the record on. Sounds a bit like The Avalanches. Yes, we know, it's not as interesting as, "Imagine if Colonel Gaddafi had employed the Art Ensemble Of Chicago", but it's a bit more, y'know, true. ***(CW)***

LICENCE TO DESTROY
Turkey Neck (BUKAKE)

BANG! The electric rabbit of the Cobber-rock '70s revival tears away and the race is on for the zillions of hair-rock tossers who've populated pub rock nights in Kidderminster since 1983 to catch it. First out of the traps are Licence To Destroy (*née* Black Moses, *née* Thee Hypnotics) with this hackneyed Who/Zep squawk that's probably older than most *NME* readers but suddenly seems 'cutting edge'. Proof that the sound of the first caveman hitting a rock with a mammoth's shinbone will be 'cutting edge' one day. Destroy with hammers. ***(MB)***

STABB
This Joke's On Me (MUSIC FOR NATIONS)

1ST REVIEW

To describe this as slightly peculiar really wouldn't do justice to this 133-second trip to the brink of insanity by Swedish (majoritively – one's Polish and another's Australian) goth-pop mentalists Stabb. Conjuring the image of Marge Simpson in one of the more unpleasant possession scenes from *The Exorcist*, frontwoman Belinda Kordis contorts her voice into a growl that's mildly unnerving but wildly captivating, even when she takes undue glee in slurring *"I'm butt ugly but, hey, so are you"*. Charming. ***(PR)***

SHIK STYLKO
Anytime Or Place (SL RECORDINGS)

1ST REVIEW

This is the kind of record that's responsible for the situation dance music fans now find themselves in: being sneered at by spotty indie boys who are into bands that sound like Lynyrd Skynyrd and think we're sad because house is now about as innovative and vibrant as an episode of *Today With Des And Mel*. German producers Shik Stylko have made some good records in the past, but this utterly moribund diva 'anthem' is not one of them. Where are Daft Punk when you need them? ***(CW)***

JAMIESON
True (V2)

What was Sugababes and Jay-Z remixer Jamieson up to last year when Mike Skinner was pushing things forward and Ms Dynamite was telling the garage community (no, the *other* one) 'It Takes More'? We'll tell you what: he was making half-assed garage tuuuuuuunes like 'True'. The plinkity-plonk strings and haggardy old bassline are complemented perfectly by no-mark female vocals, and when Jamieson MCs he sounds like Romeo's dad. Honestly. Never a 'True'-r word was spoken in jest. Arf. ***(IA)***

50 CENT
Wanksta (AFTERMATH)

1ST REVIEW

Ooh, it's all happening for Mr Cent, what with being dragged into the Jam Master Jay shootings fiasco and benefiting from a global showcase in a "music inspired by" capacity on the *8 Mile* soundtrack. Which is where we find 'Wanksta' – a wanksta being a crap gangster who can't do his job properly. Sort of like if you were to go to Munich and start picking fights with the Italian underworld, we suppose. Or if you're a rapper but your hooks are only big enough to hang a small coat. ***(PR)***

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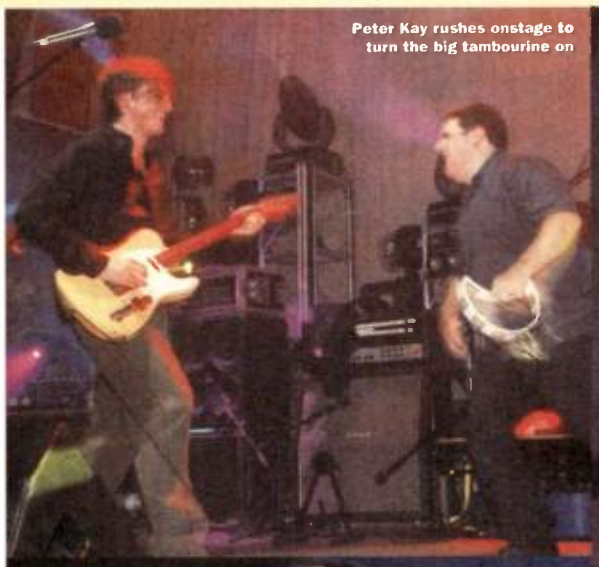
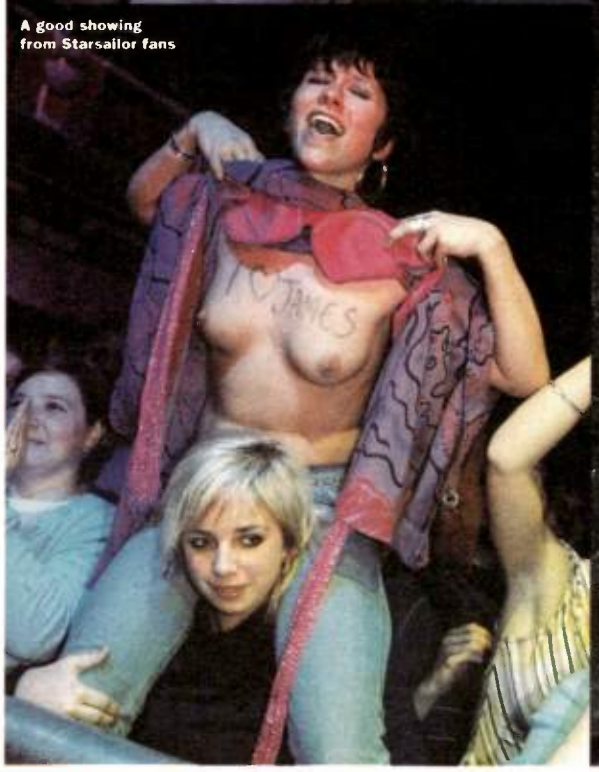
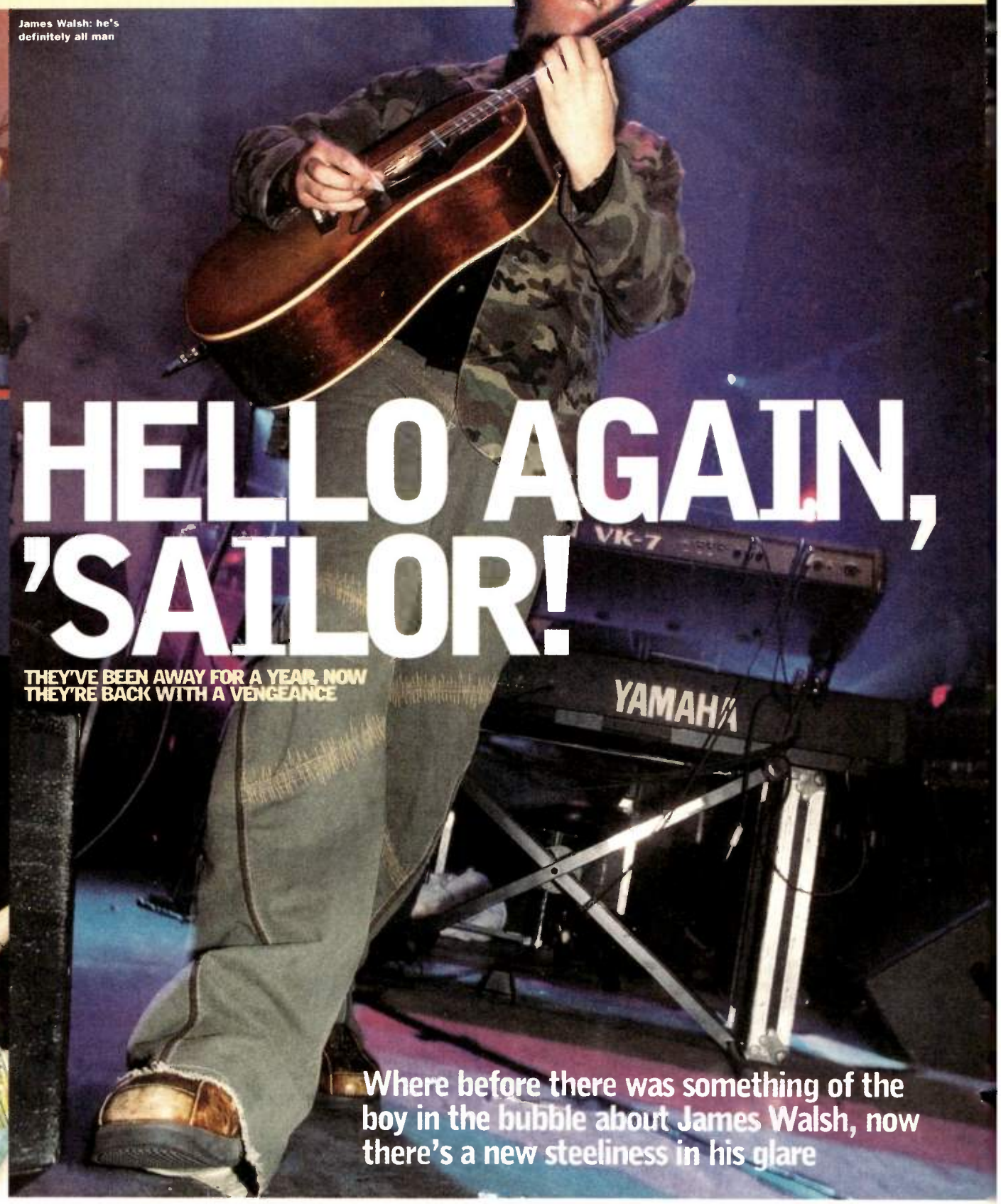


Peter Kay rushes onstage to turn the big tambourine on

"'Ave it Warrington!"



A good showing from Starsailor fans



James Walsh: he's definitely all man

HELLO AGAIN, 'SAILOR!

THEY'VE BEEN AWAY FOR A YEAR, NOW THEY'RE BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

Where before there was something of the boy in the bubble about James Walsh, now there's a new steeliness in his glare

STARSAILOR
Warrington Parr Hall

Starsailor have spent the last year recording, having babies and wondering quite where things went so right. While they were on sabbatical, though, rock was rediscovering the joys of sex and leather. Starsailor, being about love and corduroy, might risk looking like men out of time.

As if. While it helps that this is a hometown gig for charity at Christmas, we're left in no doubt that Starsailor are as important as ever. There'll be tears of joy, air-punching, and an unnecessary cover of 'I Am The Resurrection' before bedtime, but first, there's the serious business of showcasing Starsailor's new songs, the songs that tempted '60s producer legend Phil Spector out of retirement.

Starting as they mean to go on, the fulsome four power onstage with newie 'Music Was Saved' – a boisterous cousin of Doves' 'Pounding' – and never really take their feet off the gas. The far-and-away standout is 'Four To The Floor', a Red Bull-powered 'Good Souls' that takes the rules of stadium rock and retells them as a call to the heavens. It takes something special to be able to drop down to drums, vocals and mass handclaps midway through a song nobody's heard before, but if tonight's proving anything it's that their knack of writing instantly memorable chestbeaters is going to see them eclipse Coldplay before long.

Where before there was something of the boy in the bubble about James Walsh, now there's a new steeliness in his glare. Still effortlessly cuddly (he makes a special dedication to the people on the other end of the front row's phones), but decked in a camo jacket and with a baby to prove he's had sex at least once, Walsh has returned from his year off as A Man. The band's musical balls have dropped, too: 'Lullaby', 'Alcoholic' and 'Tie Up My Hands' are still led by Walsh's jaw-agape voice, but they've grown in depth and colour, sparkling with the kind of new tricks you can only learn from the Wall Of Sound Academy.

Things are just revving up. A sandblasting 'Silence Is Easy' fades bashfully out and the band leave the stage, for James to return solo with an acoustic guitar for 'Coming Down'. Nothing unusual there, except for Coldplay-like elongation, turning into a medley including REM's 'The One I Love' and U2's 'Where The Streets Have No Name'. A telling portent to where they're going, you might say, but what's actually happening is that James is buying time while tonight's special guest hot-foots it over from a show in Salford.

When Peter Kay wanders onto the stage, he's greeted like the newborn king in Bethlehem. The man might be a predictable gig fixture right now (a week ago he introduced Doves in Manchester, the week before he did the same for Badly Drawn Boy in Leeds) but anyone who can get a laugh just by looking at people is entitled to lifetime membership of the Good Souls Club.

After a quick couple of one-liners ("Next time someone says 'Penny for 'em', sell"), Kay asks if he can stay to play tambourine – the answer's yes, so we get a final, cloudbursting 'Good Souls' with the country's most charming band augmented by its finest comic. They could settle wars with this, y'know.

There are people, somewhere else, who will still dismiss Starsailor as a bunch of MOR wasters. Wrong. The future belongs to Starsailor.

Dan Martin

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDY WILLSHER

Audioslave: championing the old rock revolution

AUDIOSLAVE
New York Nassau Coliseum

To heck with carols, Christmas is the season where major radio stations across America throw concerts of epic proportions and every act praying for radio-play in the coming year is arm-twisted into performing. Hoping to toss out 2002's loudest bash, alt.radio brats K-ROQ have pulled together one of the more alluring bills, mainly down to the fact that they're hosting the highly-anticipated East Coast debut of metal supergroup Audioslave.

Chris Cornell and his ex-RATM stormtroopers start in style, with powerhouse opener 'Light My Way' provoking deafening roars. As the band flail recklessly, Cornell plays the stadium rock behemoth to the hilt, strutting and puffing his chest out like a cross between priapic Led Zep frontman Robert Plant and Foghorn Leghorn.

"This one is dedicated to Christ whose birthday we're celebrating," announces the vocalist – possibly ironically – as the band breaks into the bombastic 'Set it Off'. It may come as a surprise that three members of Rage – one of the most musically and politically extreme groups of the last decade – should be dallying with such orthodox rock-radio material. The group cruise through several more numbers including debut single 'Cochise' before landing on an ultra-dynamic 'Shadow On The Sun' to end their set.

It may not be particularly graceful stuff, but with America outside the major cities remaining largely immune to the new rock revolution, Audioslave prove that noisy passion and lumbering riffs never go out of favour. Glad tidings of comfort and noise, anyone?

Nicole Elyse

HAR MAR SUPERSTAR
Detroit Magic Stick

1ST NME REVIEW

Crooning about booty over electro beats while literally shedding his pants, Har Mar Superstar appears the pinnacle of white-boy indie irony. But there's nothing disingenuous about this hirsute, chubby seducer. Har Mar (aka Harold Martin Tillman) is Prince in porn king Ron Jeremy's body and he's got everyone from Kelly Osbourne to J.Lo wanting some.

When Har Mar asks 'Baby, Do You Like My Clothes?' it's clearly a rhetorical question, as any response is grounds for his promptly taking them off. In the prelude to his striptease he's joined by Beth Ditto of openers The Gossip. The pair's raunchy, desk-shag duet 'Power Lunch', is enough to send Har Mar's first bits of attire to the floor.

By the time the Superstar's powered through 'We Could Be Heavy', Stevie Wonder's 'Sir Duke', and the brilliantly minimal 'No Chorus', he's down to just a pair of sweat-drenched underpants and black trainers. With more than a few dollar bills in his briefs now, he tops off his (a)rousing performance with 'You Can Feel Me' punctuated by a self-inflating, "Give it up for me 'cos I'm fucking awesome!" No disagreement from our end.

Ken Taylor

DAVID HOLMES PRESENTS THE FREE ASSOCIATION
London W1 100 Club

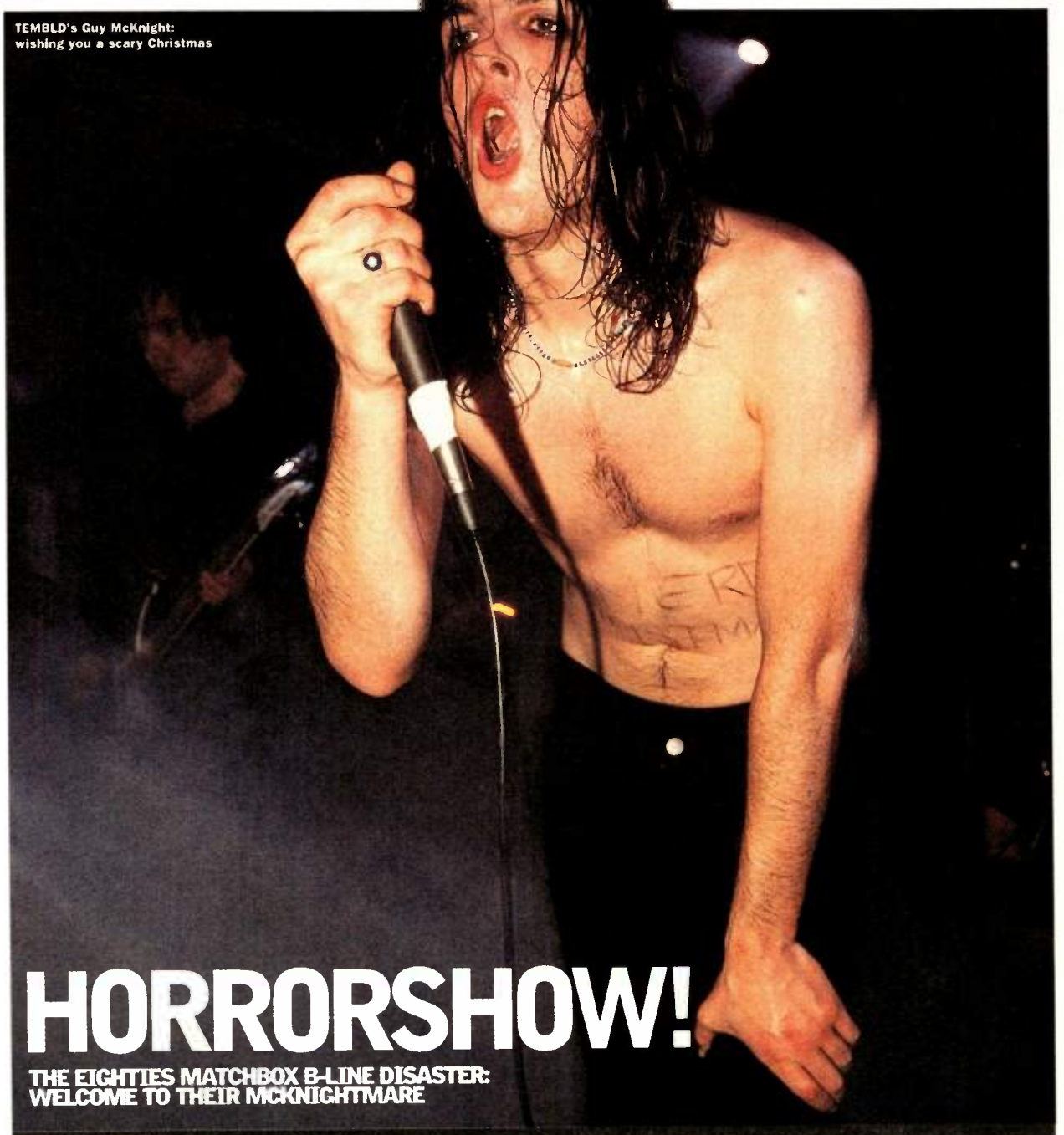
As the mantra that introduces 'Free Ass OC-8' whirls to a heady climax before the song *even starts*, it's clear that The Free Association are yet another successful David Holmes project.

The Belfast born ringmaster is a producer, DJ and Hollywood's favourite soundtracker with including blockbusters *Ocean's 11* and *Out Of Sight* under his belt. Given his obsession with unearthing the funkiest cuts from long-forgotten heroes of the '60s and '70s, it's surprising he didn't put together his own soul-rock band sooner.

The music is a departure from Holmes' usual fare. While his albums are paranoiac urban soundclashes, The Free Association belt out sunshine and good vibes. Although Holmes is the driving force, the fearsome talents of Californian MC Sean Reveron (skinny-ass tall frame and dreads) and singer Petra Jean Phillipson (slight build, classic soul voice) are showcased to brilliant effect. But it's the freewheeling groove of 'Everybody Knows' and '(I Wish I Had A) Wooden Heart' that are the real heroes, stunningly infectious songs which sit neatly between Sly Stone's 'Dance To The Music' and Funkadelic's 'One Nation Under A Groove'.

So Holmes has moved nimbly, effortlessly invaded and conquered a new medium for his talent – 'cos tonight he's a rock and soul star.

Anthony Thornton



TEMBLD's Guy McKnight: wishing you a scary Christmas

HORRORSHOW!

THE EIGHTIES MATCHBOX B-LINE DISASTER: WELCOME TO THEIR MCKNIGHTMARE

THE EIGHTIES MATCHBOX B-LINE DISASTER
Brighton Concorde 2

This is one Christmas shindig you definitely wouldn't want to take your seven-year-old nephew to – unless you wanted to bring down the wrath of Social Services. This is Seaside Psychosis, hosted by mother-fixated ne'er-do-wells TEMBD as a gift to their home crowd.

Entering to the last known copy of skunk-rock dolts Campag Velocet's 'Bon Chic Bon Genre', Guy McKnight, dressed as an eyelinered bondage Santa, gets a rapturous anti-hero's welcome. But his garb is soon thrown to the chilly beachfront wind after a deranged rendering of 'Morning Has Broken'. Instead we're 'treated' to the sight of that pasty white skeletal torso soundtracked by gothabilly surf guitars that would make The Beach Boys spit blood. In the twanging of a guitar string, Guy becomes a ravaged dinosaur of glitch-grind-metal; gurning, twitching, blowing kisses and staring into the middle distance like a drooling loon. When he howls *"All you people can come to my home"* on 'Presidential Wave', he obviously means it. But would anyone want to?

But while Guy does his electroshock therapy dance, there's a guitar attack going on of such proportions that George Bush is probably taking notes for his next bombing raid. Not losing touch with the festive spirit, the singer wishes the audience a "Merry... down cider". Especially at this time of year, it's nice to see where a band's priorities lie.

Leonie Cooper

THE SLEEPY JACKSON
Sydney Hopetoun Hotel

1ST NME REVIEW

Blimey. Just when we thought all Antipodean bands were leather-loined nu-retro rockers, along come Perth's experimental geniuses The Sleepy Jackson to mess with our preconceptions. No dog-eared AC/DC riffs here: they start their set with 'Fill Me With Apples' – less a song, more a morose verse recited over a piano loop – before lurching into the violent spasms of 'Cavities'. Already, drummer Malcolm Clark has splintered a stick and frontman Luke Steele is practically convulsing, pummelling his guitar with such intensity that a hapless roadie only narrowly avoids having his head lopped off.

But it's not all homicidal bonkersville. With an exhilarating Jekyll-and-Hyde eccentricity that'll soon make them galactically famous, The Sleepy Jackson also mine a neat seam of contagious sunshine pop. 'Good Dancers' is the mellifluous equivalent of chocolate ice-cream on a hot summer's day, while the hugely infectious 'This Day' is part Flaming Lips and part Lennon & McCartney at their rollicking, anthemic best. Nice.

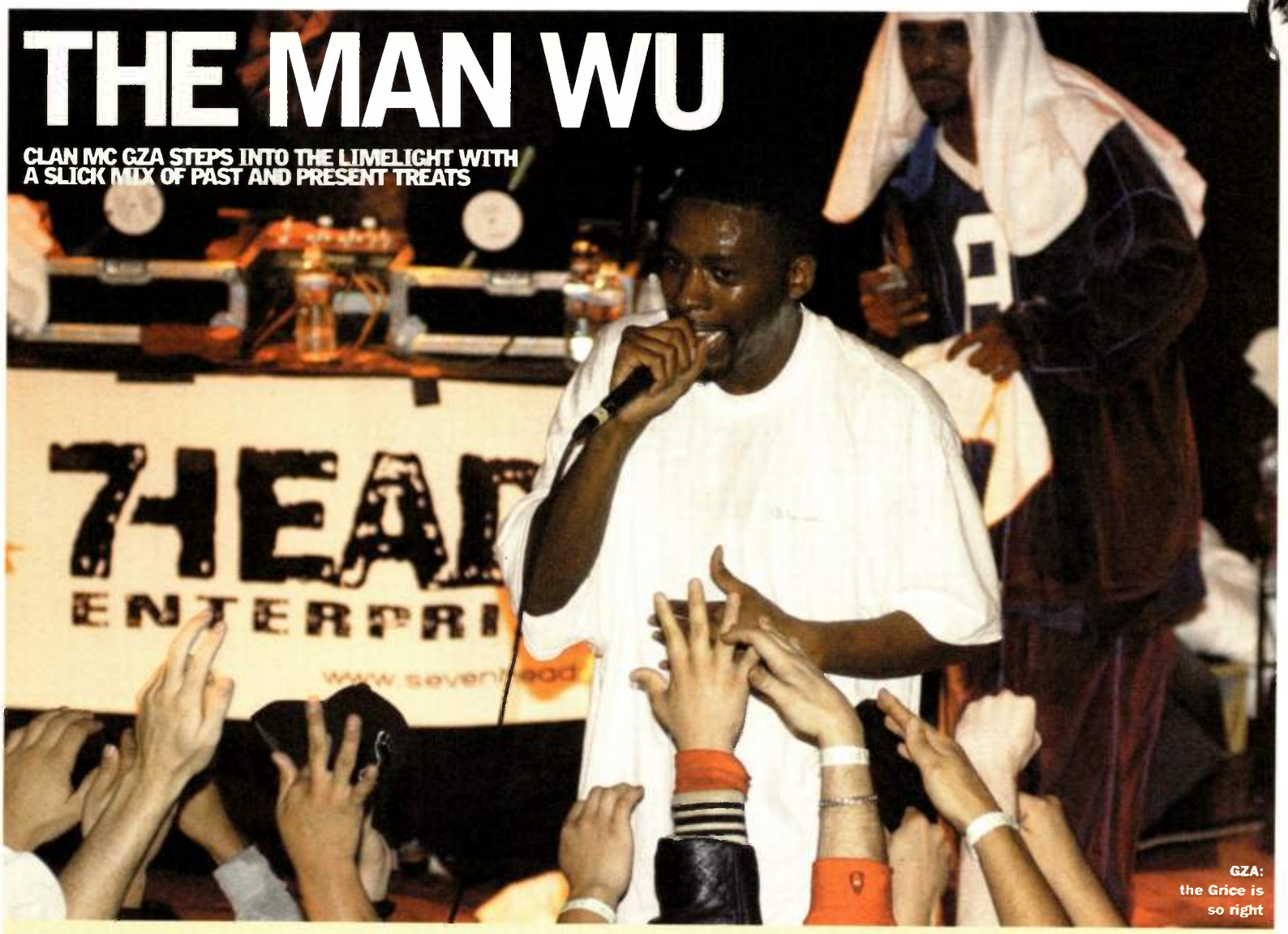
Then it's over, Luke blowing kisses and trying to auction off the drumkit before jubilantly bounding offstage, his guitar merrily blurting feedback from its discarded spot by the speakers. Be prepared to give your heart to The Sleepy Jackson, because they are going to be one of the most important bands of 2003.

Alicia Brodersen

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES LOOKER/SEBASTIAN ARTZ

THE MAN WU

CLAN MC GZA STEPS INTO THE LIMELIGHT WITH A SLICK MIX OF PAST AND PRESENT TREATS



GZA: the Grice is so right

GZA
Los Angeles Knitting Factory

Ignore for a minute the merchandising overkill, movie deals and Ol' Dirty Bastard's parole-violating antics. At the heart of the Wu-Tang Clan myth is a musical legacy that transformed hip-hop forever. While Dre and Snoop were busy inventing G-funk in the sunshine, the Wu were holed up in New York fixating over martial arts movies and producing tense, doomy tales of city life. One of the key architects of their sound was GZA, aka The Genius, aka Gary Grice, also the man behind the most accomplished of the often shoddy Wu solo efforts, 1995's classic 'Liquid Swords'. Now, with fourth album 'Legend Of The Liquid Sword' about to appear, this often overlooked and underrated MC steps back into the limelight, causing a capacity crowd to pump their fists to a jamboree of Wu-related material past and present.

New joints include the obligatory name-dropping 'Fame', a piano-powered head-nodder that checks everyone from Abraham Lincoln to Elizabeth Taylor in a clever verbal concoction. GZA shouts, "We just came from the 'hood, now we're taking it to the jungle" before moving into 'Animal Planet', injecting fresh life into a stale hip-hop cliché – the juxtaposition of the ghetto with the jungle – through a solid beat and slick soul samples.

The incredibly named Allah Mathematics handles the turntables deftly while GZA treats the crowd to versions of tracks from the evergreen first two Wu albums and some of his more bouncing solo cuts. Hearing him hold down rhymes originally done by other Clan members on classics like 'Older Godz' and 'Triumph' initially proves a bit disappointing, but GZA's rough, sanguine delivery soon wins out. He even takes a moment to pay homage to the most maligned of the Clan, leading the heads in a chant of "Free ODB!" before breaking into the dirty one's 'Shimmy Shimmy Ya', letting LA know he "likes it raw". Pure Genius.

Tony Bogdanovski

PRIMAL SCREAM/ THE KILLS
London Brixton Academy

Tonight is mostly about attitude triumphing in the face of adversity. Being a two-piece, The Kills can't help but look a bit lost in the cavernous Academy, but with songs as ferocious as 'Cat Claw' and 'Black Rooster' they fill it with rickety noise of the highest order. Although their reliance on backing tapes means they lack the dynamism of certain other boy/girl duos, they make up for it with their acute sense of carefully studied rock'n'roll cool.

Of course, when it comes to studied cool Bobby Gillespie must have a PhD. Bounding onstage clad in black, he and his band break the sound barrier with a positively ferocious 'Accelerator'. Then the problems start. Sequencers misfire during 'Miss Lucifer', blunting the panther girl's claws. Then during a 'Burning Wheel' dedicated to Liam Gallagher, something blows completely and the band struggle to the end of an ironically toothless version.

Bobby reacts badly, looking distracted and sitting down, leaving Mani – the beating heart and soul of Primal Scream – to thank us for coming to their "live soundcheck" and generally add a touch of humanism to the relentless techno rock onslaught, before shoving Bobby back onstage for the encore.

It takes a rough and ready 'Jailbird', a celebratory 'Movin' On Up' and a terminal velocity take on the MC5's 'Kick Out The Jams' for the band to regain their stride. And what a stride. If this was a bad night, it proves just how astonishingly good Primal Scream are when their hearts are *really* in it.

Nathaniel Cramp

Primal Scream: a triumph – against the odds

POLICECHIEF
Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut

Sweden, Auckland and Camden might have already succumbed, but not every corner of the world has been conquered by the new rock revolution. Take Glasgow's Policechief: the fact that the six-piece shun wearing Strokes-style skinny Ts might not be a surprise. That they choose to resurrect the blighted – and desperately unfashionable – spirit of early-'90s dance-rock to fight their anti-garage rearguard action most definitely is.

Effortlessly demolishing the preconception that the Glaswegian music scene is only capable of producing wan Mogwai copyists or inconsequential cardigan-wearing indie bands, Policechief harness a blitzkrieg of bass-heavy beats'n'breaks with filthy fuzz guitar in a riotous and totally irresistible party soundtrack. The emphasis here is definitely more on having an unselfconsciously good time than standing about looking cool and fuckable in your dad's old suit. Think Happy Mondays with style and cleaner drugs on 'New Kind Of Gravity', or Bomb The Bass getting down with Primal Scream on 'Beatrok State'; the latter a pulsating mess of hip-hop beats spliced to synth-heavy locked grooves. For a genre marred by past embarrassments, dance-rock crossovers never sounded so good. Call the cops!

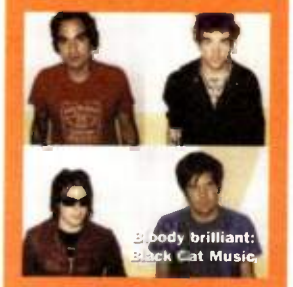
Debbie Prior

IN MY PLACE

Your guide to what's new in San Francisco with Chris Appelgren of The Pattern

"One of my favourite bands here at the moment are a bunch of '70s-style new wavers called **The Evening** who are still unsigned and sport some incredible moustaches. There are some cool local labels too, like Rock'n'Roll Blitzkrieg. They put out on vinyl the last record by **The Cuts** – a raw, garage rock band with a flowery Californian twist.

"San Francisco has a very seedy history, and that's something we try to maintain! It's a very dark and drugged-up place and a bastion for all manner of naughty behaviour. Like **Ghost Orchid**, a great band whose shows always turn into amazing pilled-up events.



Bloody brilliant: Black Cat Music

"San Francisco has a very seedy history and that's something we try to maintain"

They have been compared to The Faint and Fischerspooner and their next record will be the first release for another new label called Princehouse.

"Lookout! Records has been the mainstay of punk rock here for the last 15 years – it's also the label I run. One of our most exciting acts is **Black Cat Music** – a group of sensitive boys writing about red wine and blood. The bassist runs a cool club called Fake where all the bands hang out and horny boys and girls go to make dates. They get up to all sorts of mischief there!"

Kristi Murison

PHOTOGRAPHY: SEBASTIAN ARTZ/ROGER SARGENT/SAM JONES

DETROIT CITY MOTORS!

GARAGE ROCK STARS COME HOME FOR A FESTIVE KNEES-UP

Meg White and Oliver Soledad: Detroit's own Posh'n'Becks

DETROIT CITY SOUNDS & SPIRITS
Detroit CPOP Gallery

It may not seem as monumental as Bing Crosby meeting Bowie, but the Detroit nu-rock mob's holiday spectacular has its share of show-stoppers, challenging the garage rock credo that 'less is more' in a matey display of 'let's do the show right here'-type unpretentiousness.

A benefit gig spread across two stages in an art gallery, tonight a bunch of local acts are to play a couple of specially-prepared numbers. And, with The White Stripes and Von Bondies here, gossip is rife over which of garage-rock's glitterati will be the first to make an impromptu performance.

Neo-psychers **THE WAXWINGS** kick off the night with fuzzed-out versions of Charlie Brown and Kinks' Christmas tunes. On an alternate stage, Meg White's flatmate **KO KNOCKOUT** delivers an anti-Christmas folk ditty.

The crowd is at capacity as all-star crew **THE COME ONS** tear through 'Don't Forget to Feed the Reindeer', but the real suprises are to come: a woman known only as **FAITH** emerges from the crowd to belt out two Kurt Weill-type numbers with just an accordion, outshining many of tonight's scheduled acts. **BRENDAN BENSON** appears as well, playing guitar on Tiffany And Company's 'Santa Baby'.

Then, after much anticipation, **JACK WHITE** takes centre stage and rips into a rollicking rendition of Elvis' 'One Night' with Meg looking on from the crowd. Tonight it's **THE SOLEDAD BROTHERS' BEN SWANK** who's banging the drumkit and adding raucous punctuation to White's howling vocals. It's all the more incredible for its spontaneity.

Poor old **ELECTRIC 6** are picked to close the night, covering Sting's 'Russia' and 'Gloria In Excelsis Deo', but they have a hard task igniting a crowd still reeling from White's explosion. Still, 2002 has been a vintage year for Detroit and its musicians, and very little can stop this party from being the perfect end to the year.

Ken Taylor

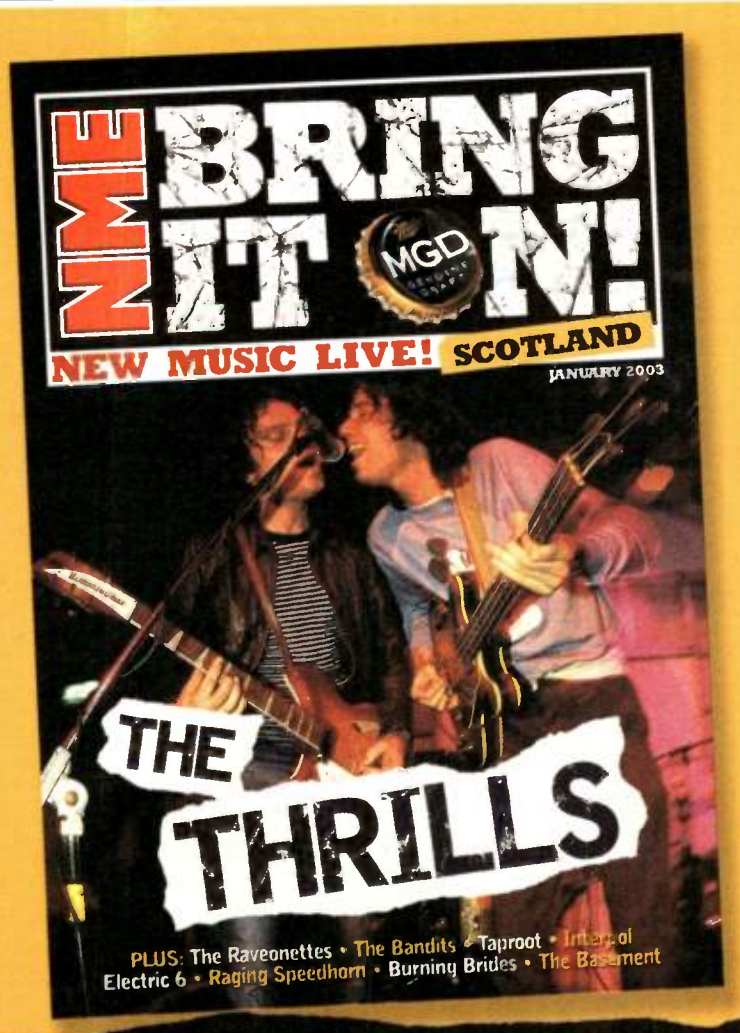
PHOTOGRAPHY: ANGIE BAAN

White Christmas treat: 'One Night' with Jack and Soledad Bro' Ben Swank

Different Stripes: Jack White and Ben Swank

Kissing cousins: Meg's flatmate Ko and Marcie Von Bondie

"Fancy a Benson?": Jack White bums a post-new rock revolution fag off Brendan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LIVE GIG GUIDE

From Wednesday January 8 to Tuesday January 14

Britain's best and biggest gig list. Send your dates to *NME* Gig Guide, 25th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Or fax the info to 020 7261 7718. Or email to *gigs@ipcmedia.com*. To ensure publication, your dates should reach us at least 14 days before our cover date. Please send a telephone number for all venues with your listings

VISIT *NME*'S GIG SEARCH AT www.nmetickets.com

WEDNESDAY 8

ABERDEEN My Decaying Leg/Electric Tibet/Film 288 Lemon Tree 01224 642230
BIRMINGHAM Clangar Moseley, Jug Of Ale 0121 449 1082
The Times/Bluejay/Sidekick Edwards No.8 0121 643 5835
BRIGHTON Kubrik/Proudhon/Danielson Freebutt 01273 603974
BRISTOL Chikinki/Dust/Too Late Fleece & Firkin 0117 945 0996
CAMBRIDGE David Greeves/Lisa Redford/Tom Kelsall/Frank Boat Race 01223 508533
DUBLIN Firehouse Parnell Mooney 00 3531 873 1544
EDINBURGH Cilar Pleasance 0131 556 6550
GLASGOW Rotting Christ/Enthroned/Primordial Cathouse 0141 248 6606
LEICESTER Mercurial/3 Gun Pete/Escape/The Hope Anti Jack Knife Device/Her Aversion Attik 0116 222 3800
LONDON Breather/Corporation Blend/Red Jetson Tottenham Court Road Metro Club W1 020 7437 0964
Terry Caillier Camden Jazz Cafe NW1 020 7916 6060
The Cling/Betasco/Sonic Rivai Camden Barfly @ The Monarch NW1 0870 907 0999
Consumed Camden Underworld NW1 020 7482 1932
Haematic Putney Half Moon SW15 020 8780 9383
Homoeoclance/Aerospace/Of Montreal King's Cross Water Rats WC1 020 7436 7211
James Keen Balham Bedford SW12 020 8682 8940
Mooka/David Burn Farringdon Betsey Trotwood EC1 020 7253 4285
The Mendoza Line Charing Cross Road Borderline WC2 020 7734 2095
New Orleans Heat Enfield Townhouse 020 8367 1920
Sounder/The ID/The Yottys/Evil Genius Camden Dublin Castle NW1 020 7485 1773
Stef & Arno/Red Hot Monster Club/Cheeseburger Shoreditch Catch E2 020 7729 6097
Taxi/Lottie MacLean/Ella Guru/Lux Highbury Corner Buffalo Bar N1 020 7359 6191
Upcdownleftcrightc ABC/Fast Food Kentish Town Bull & Gate NW5 020 7485 5358
Windsor For The Derby Aldgate East Arts Cafe E1 020 7247 5681
MANCHESTER The Pioneers/Scene 81 Night And Day Cafe 0161 236 1822
NORTH SHIELDS Pete Dodds Magnesia Bank 0191 257 4831
NOTTINGHAM Electric Banana Social 0115 950 5078
The Music/Nylon Pylon Rock City 0115 941 2544
SHEFFIELD Rain Boardwalk 0114 279 9090
SOUTHAMPTON Dawn Parade Talking Heads 023 8055 5899
ST ALBANS Flak Horn 01727 853143

THURSDAY 9

BATH Pop Threat/The Real Losers/The Revelations/The 7 Inches Moles 01225 404445
BELFAST Bill Wilson Waterfront 028 9033 4455
BIRMINGHAM Farfallen/Hentai/Cile Edwards No.8 0121 643 5835
Forsaken Scruffy Murphy's 0121 333 3201
Vender Flapper & Firkin 0121 236 2421
BOURNEMOUTH Dawn Parade Mister Smith's 01202 291617
Tex La Homa Bartonka 01202 317423
BRADFORD Rotting Christ/Enthroned/Primordial Rio 01274 735549
BRIGHTON Mark Edwards Prince Albert 01273 730499
Levegada Sanctuary 01273 770006
Of Montreal/Herman Dune Freebutt 01273 603974
BRISTOL Easter Town/Phonic Fleece & Firkin 0117 945 0996
Wind Marbles Louisiana 0117 926 5978
BURY ST EDMUNDS No Angel Grapes 01284 754360
We Start Fires/We Can Build You/Thirdside Prior Inn 01284 748941
CREWE John Young Limelight 01270 251929
GLASGOW Red Path/Wade/Jiva King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
HANLEY Easyworld/Medium 21 Sugarmill 01782 214991
HIGH WYCOMBE Reuben/Miazma White Horse 01494 527672
LEICESTER Chiefs/Punk Panther/The Goons Attik 0116 222 3800
Vikki Clayton Musician 0116 251 0080
The Hangmen/Super Massive Object/Sparrowman Charlotte 0116 255 3956
LONDON Terry Caillier Camden Jazz Cafe NW1 020 7916 6060
Capitol K/Marshmallow Coast/Printed Circuit Aldgate East Arts Cafe E1 020 7247 5681
Nick Carter/Son Of King Rebel Chalk Farm Enterprise NW3 020 7485 2659
Joey Cape Riot/Dolls House/The Sam I Am Camden Dublin Castle NW1 020 7485 1773
Carly Circus Aldgate East Spitz E1 020 7392 9032
Dr Sativa's Mystic Music Soho St Moritz W1 020 7437 0525
The Game/Fucking Beautiful/Stillman's Pistos Kentish Town Bull & Gate NW5 020 7485 5358
Hercules Old Street Cargo EC2 020 7613 7731
Hindsight/Jesid/Critical Path Kingston Peel 020 8546 3516
The Like/Size 8/Star Chamber/Red Fishes Highbury Corner Garage N5 020 7607 1818
Luxer/Echelon King's Cross Water Rats WC1 020 7436 7211
Project Almer/Ataraxy/Zoosiski Islington Hope'n'Anchor N1 020 7378 6095
Riley/The Groove Putney Half Moon SW15 020 8780 9383
Slam Cartel/Psycha/The Cognition/Honey Punks Charing Cross Road Borderline WC2 020 7734 2095
MANCHESTER No Standards Ashton Under Lyne, Witchwood 0161 344 0321
Skin On Skin/Beatsteaks Night And Day Cafe 0161 236 1822
NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME King Pleasure & The Biscuit Boys New Victoria Theatre 01782 717962
NORTH SHIELDS Witchkraft Garrick's Head 0191 296 2064
NOTTINGHAM Equaliser Junktion 7 0115 970 4662
Social Alliance Social 0115 950 5078
PORTSMOUTH Hidden Agenda/Zero Tolerance/Third Degree Burn/Dead Jack Wedgewood Rooms 023 9286 3911
SHEFFIELD Roman Joo/Mezzro/Furious George Boardwalk 0114 279 9090
ST ALBANS Los Pacaminos Horn 01727 853143
WILLENHALL Souldriver Alcatraz Rock Club 01902 834777

FRIDAY 10

ABERDEEN Storm Petrel/Young Girls Wanted/Chymes Lemon Tree 01224 642230
BEDLINGTON Dave Gibb Dun Cow 01670 823083
BIRMINGHAM Dorcia/Blue Nation/McFly Flapper & Firkin 0121 236 2421
Easyworld/Medium 21 Academy 2 0121 262 3000
Tybalt/The Reverends Moseley, Jug Of Ale 0121 449 1082
BRISTOL Leafcutter John/Mountain Men Anonymous/Biskupin/Melting Field Thekla 0117 929 3301
Of Montreal Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Suspects Fleece & Firkin 0117 945 0996
BURY ST EDMUNDS Ratinaseck Grapes 01284 754360
CAMBRIDGE Nick Barraclough Portland Arms 01223 357268
Miss Black America Boat Race 01223 508533
DERBY Soliloquy/The Climb/Vinyl Resin Victoria Inn 01332 740091
DUBLIN Arvecne Morrison Hotel 00 3531 887 2400
Martin Nolan Draiocht 00 3531 885 2622
Alan Pullen Temple Theatre 00 3531 874 5088
The Stand Whelans 00 3531 478 0766
Paul Tiernan Cobblestone 00 3531 872 1799
GLASGOW B2 Bombers Cathouse 0141 248 6606
Paperback Throne/Ampersand Fury Murrys 0141 221 6511
Spacehopper/Kambia/Dogs Die in Hot Cars King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
GRIMSBY Karl Herd & The Storm Spider's Web 01472 692670
GUILDFORD 50 Calibre/Friends Of Ed/Mirrormen Community Centre 01483 575349
HARLOW Dawn Parade/Grand Juke Square 01279 305000
HEBDEN BRIDGE George Borowski Trades Club 01422 845265
HIGH WYCOMBE Sumo White Horse 01494 527672
HOVE Miller Anderson Neptune Bar 01273 736390
LEEDS The Immortals Fenton 0113 245 3908
LEICESTER Kent Du Chaine/Al Sansom Musician 0116 251 0080
Five Green Bottles/The Carolgoes/ Tracksuit Charlotte 0116 255 3956
JM Not Cif/Drongos For Europe/Cock Ups/Nags/War Against Reason/DSS/Narcotix Attik 0116 222 3800
LIMERICK The Liars Hi Stool 00 35349 854 4880
LIVERPOOL I Pineta/The Bridge Picket 0151 708 5318
The Wane Cavern Club 0151 236 1964
LONDON Beatsteaks/Fletcher Highbury Corner Garage N5 020 7607 1818
Blind Pilot/Jody/Jindy Sandhu/Jane Taylor Charing Cross Road Spice Of Life WC2 020 7437 7013
Budgie Charing Cross Road Mean Fiddler WC2 020 7434 0403
The Buff Medways Tufnell Park Boston Arms N19 020 7272 8153
Miles Dance Aldgate East Spitz E1 020 7392 9032
The Donkeys Walthamstow Standard E17 020 8503 2523
El Stet/Nashville Sci-Fi/Special Needs Kentish Town Bull & Gate NW5 020 7485 5358
Fabulous Feedback Band Stockwell Swan SW9 020 7978 9778
The Feeling/Alf Alpha/The Wires Islington Hope'n'Anchor N1 020 7378 6095
Florida Tottenham Court Road 12 Bar Club WC2 020 7916 6989
Hurricane Party/The Raconteurs/Clangor Camden Barfly @ The Monarch NW1 0870 907 0999
Anne Jacyszon Chelsea Bluebird SW3 020 7559 1000
Jazzyfatmatoes Camden Jazz Cafe NW1 020 7916 6060
Little Johnny England/Emily Slade Charing Cross Road Borderline WC2 020 7734 2095
The Music/Nylon Pylon Brixton Academy SW9 0870 771 2000
Red Cherry/Agora King's Cross Water Rats WC1 020 7436 7211
Sarah Jane Farringdon Betsey Trotwood EC1 020 7253 4285
Winter Long/New Rhodes/Idioverse Camden Dublin Castle NW1 020 7485 1773

PICK OF THE WEEK

The Thrills set out on an Irish tour in preparation for their dates on the *NME* Awards Tour 2003, alongside The Datsuns, The Polyphonic Spree and Interpol. Their summery, West Coast Americana style is earning them a reputation as one of the bands to look out for in 2003. With influences ranging from The Beach Boys to Burt Bacharach and Beck, The Thrills' debut album promises to be a feast of great songwriting. Before its arrival, a new single is scheduled for release on March 3, titled 'One Horse Town'. Soak yourself in the sunshine sound of The Thrills at the Dundalk Spirit Stores (January 14).

MANCHESTER Green/Cable Car/White Knight Night And Day Cafe 0161 236 1822
The Negatives/Flint/3CR Star & Garter 0161 273 6726
Uncle Foster/Tom Smith Ashton Under Lyne, Witchwood 0161 344 0321
NORTH SHIELDS Cadillac 59 Garnick's Head 0191 296 2064
E-Man-City Magnesia Bank 0191 257 4831
Psychedelic Breakfast/Matt & Simon Wooden Doll 0191 258 1235
NORWICH King Pleasure & The Biscuit Boys Arts Centre 01603 660352
NOTTINGHAM Big Daddy Social 0115 950 5078
RYDE Reuben Squadron 01983 563391
SHEFFIELD The Dizzy Club Boardwalk 0114 279 9090
SOUTHAMPTON Jor/Eden Main/Fluxated/Near Life Experience Joiners 023 8022 5612
SUNDERLAND Fist Duke Of Cumberland 0191 420 0568
WESTHOUGHTON Jaz Lowe Golf Club 01942 840545
WEXFORD Kieran Goss Riverbank House Hotel 00 3535 323611
WINCHESTER Doll's Cat Railway Inn 01962 867795
YORK Van Morrison Barbican Centre 01904 656688

SATURDAY 11

ALDERSHOT Reuben West End Centre 01252 330040
BATH The Crescent/James Reade Moles 01225 404445
BELFAST Blind Summit/Solid Air Giros Cafe 028 9024 4640
BIRMINGHAM 360/The Epics Scruffy Murphy's 0121 333 3201
Flint Moseley, Jug Of Ale 0121 449 1082
Hellcon/You Delinquents Flapper & Firkin 0121 236 2421
Shadow Play Old Railway 0121 333 6434
Ted's Complex Roadhouse 0121 624 2920
BRADFORD Jacasta Project/Tisk Rio 01274 735549
Leafeater Penningtons 01274 304455
Threshold Shift Britannia 01274 582176
BRIGHTON Ska Gal/Out Of Luck Freebutt 01273 603974
BRISTOL Tailfeather Fleece & Firkin 0117 945 0996
Tobacco Road/Murdoch Louisiana 0117 926 5978
BURY ST EDMUNDS Jimmi Topp Grapes 01284 754360
CAMBRIDGE The Morning People/Odette Mitchell Portland Arms 01223 357268
CARDIFF Harper/Chapter 21 Barfly 029 2066 7658
DORCHESTER The Spikedrivers Arts Centre 01305 266926
DUBLIN The Licks Whelans 00 3531 478 0766
Santoria Slattery's 00 3531 497 2052
FARNBOROUGH Sheena Davies 500 Club 01256 387243
GLASGOW BMX Bandits/Ben Vaughn/John Hoefflour King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
HEBDEN BRIDGE Sancffi Trades Club 01422 845265
HIGH WYCOMBE Skindred/Mahumodo/Blind Eye Policy/Vertibreak White Horse 01494 527672
HULL The Hardy Band Adelphi 01482 348216
LEEDS Exhumate Fenton 0113 245 3908
LEICESTER Big Mogg & The Blues Cats Musician 0116 251 0080
Of Montreal Lamplighters 0116 255 1228
Phat Jerusalem Attik 0116 222 3800
LONDON Breach/Fake Kingston Peel 020 8546 3516
DJ Kong Islington Embassy Bar N1 020 7359 7882
Dummy Head Stereo/Louly Louly/From Day One/Luxembourg Kentish Town Bull & Gate NW5 020 7485 5358
Goonies Stockwell Swan SW9 020 7978 9778
K90 Clerkenwell Turnmills EC1 020 7250 3409
King Pleasure & The Biscuit Boys Oxford Street 100 Club W1 020 7636 0933
Living With Eating Disorders/Suffer Kiss Highbury Corner Garage N5 020 7607 1818
The Lovers/The Sound Of Things Stoke Newington Ryan's Bar N16 020 7275 7807
Donal Maguire Euston Cock Tavern NW1 020 7281 7700
Mesh/The Droyds/Clear Vision Charing Cross Road Mean Fiddler WC2 020 7434 0403
New Cool Collective Camden Jazz Cafe NW1 020 7916 6060
Paolo/Pacific Ocean Fire/Audio Journal Camden Barfly @ The Monarch NW1 0870 907 0999
Plastic Heroes/Rockettes Tottenham Court Road Metro Club W1 020 7437 0964
Shark/The Vinyls/Neoner Islington Hope'n'Anchor N1 020 7378 6095
SK Radicals/Izzi Dunn Ladbroke Grove Subterania W10 020 8960 4590
Skua/Abraham Man/Duet Camden Dublin Castle NW1 020 7485 1773
Ricky Spontano/Baptista/Silver Surfer/St Joan Aldgate East Spitz E1 020 7392 9032
Stef & Arno/Aqua Vista/Fifty Foot Combo Shoreditch On The Rocks E2 020 7278 1074
MANCHESTER Martin Brew Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
Euphoria/Monomania Night And Day Cafe 0161 236 1822
The Music/Nylon Pylon Academy 0161 275 2930
MIDDLESBROUGH Easyworld/Medium 21 Empire 01642 253553
MILTON KEYNES Arthur Lee & Love Stables 01908 280800
NEWPORT Beatsteaks TJ's 01633 216608
NORTH SHIELDS Junior Garrick's Head 0191 296 2064
Mo Scott & Rod Sinclair Magnesia Bank 0191 257 4831
NOTTINGHAM Fraid Rock City 0115 941 2544
The Old Bastard Social 0115 950 5078
OXFORD Vade Mecum Downstairs At The Zodiac 01865 420042
SHEFFIELD Ju Ju Boardwalk 0114 279 9090
SOUTHAMPTON Total Silence/Kicking Bird/Ditzy Micro/Blaine Street Joiners 023 8022 5612
TUNBRIDGE WELLS Capdown Forum 01892 530411
WINCHESTER Little Red Car Railway Inn 01962 867795
YORK Van Morrison Barbican Centre 01904 656688

SUNDAY 12

ABERDEEN Ray Leonard Lemon Tree 01224 642230
BRIGHTON Fletcher/Beatsteaks Freebutt 01273 603974
CARDIFF Scuttle/Midasuno/Along Came Man Barfly 029 2066 7658
CORK Big Generator Rearden's Bar 00 35321 427 1969
Kieran Goss Opera House 00 35321 270022
CREWE King Pleasure & The Biscuit Boys Limelight 01270 251929
GLASGOW Tori Amos Clyde Auditorium 0141 248 3000
Easyworld/Medium 21 King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
The Music/Nylon Pylon Barrowlands 0141 552 4601
HEBDEN BRIDGE Andy Stone Trades Club 01422 845265
HOVE Nadia Saki & Dave Trigwell Neptune Bar 01273 736390
LIVERPOOL The Wane Cavern Club 0151 236 1964
LONDON Black Lily Old Street Cargo EC2 020 7613 7731
Day 13/Urban Faith/Kyrb Grinder Charing Cross Road Borderline WC2 020 7734 2095
Dury Falls/Hiding With Girls/RX Camden Barfly @ The Monarch NW1 0870 907 0999
Grouper Stockwell Swan SW9 020 7978 9778
JMC Hackney Ocean 3 E8 020 7314 2800

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London Electric Guitar Orchestra Finsbury Park Red Rose Club N7 020 7263 7265
Mellout Ladbroke Grove Subterania W10 020 8960 4590
Nine Below Zero Camden Jazz Cafe NW1 020 7916 6060
Plan B/Faster/Jail Camden Dublin Castle NW1 020 7485 1773
Rascals Of Shoo Shoo Dang Dang Croydon Cartoon 020 8239 1616
The Solution/The Trace Kentish Town Bull & Gate NW5 020 7485 5358
Yeast/Sun Factor/Blocko/Otherwise Highbury Corner Garage N5 020 7607 1818
MANCHESTER **Arx** Star & Garter 0161 273 6726
NOTTINGHAM **Herman Dune** Social 0115 950 5078
SHEFFIELD **Kent Du Chaine** Boardwalk 0114 279 9090
STOKE **Drongos For Europe/Seventeen Stitches/Skeptix** Talbot 01782 845507
WINDSOR **Michaela Manley/Amrit Sond** Arts Centre 01753 859336

MONDAY 13

BATH **The Bullets/Twisted/Joeb/Cracatilla** Moles 01225 404445
BRIGHTON **Reality V/Fission Ignition/Torpedo Blue** Pressure Point 01273 702333
The UV's/Ground Zero Freebutt 01273 603974
BRISTOL **Arthur Lee & Love** Colston Hall 0117 922 3683
LONDON **Echoboy/3 Head** Camden Barfly @ The Monarch NW1 0870 907 0999
Get Up Kids Malet Street ULU WC1 020 7664 2000
Lynam Kentish Town Bull & Gate NW5 020 7485 5358
Kevin Montgomery/Redland Palomino Co Charing Cross Road Borderline WC2 020 7734 2095
More Than Normal/Spoonerism Islington Hope'n'Anchor N1 020 7378 6095
Nature Boy/Alucidnation Aldgate East Spitz E1 020 7392 9032
Josephine Oniyama/1st Notting Hill Arts Club W11 020 7460 4459
Ram Cat Surfer/Jaded/Malago Camden Dublin Castle NW1 020 7485 1773
The Roots Camden Jazz Cafe NW1 020 7916 6060
MANCHESTER **Tori Amos** Apollo 0161 242 2560
NEWPORT **Count Me Out/Sworn In** TJ's 01633 216608
NORWICH **Reuben** Arts Centre 01603 660352
STOKE **Of Montreal** Talbot 01782 845507

TUESDAY 14

ABERDEEN **Easyworld/Medium 21** Lava 01224 648000
BELFAST **Jonathan Veira** NTL Studio 028 9033 4455
BIRMINGHAM **Get Up Kids** Academy 2 0121 262 3000
Jesse Malin/Jeff Klein Flapper & Firkin 0121 236 2421
BRISTOL **Wax On Wax Off/Sumoflsh** Fleece & Firkin 0117 945 0996
CAMBRIDGE **Reuben** Boat Race 01223 508533
CARDIFF **Of Montreal** Toucan Club 029 2066 8173
CREWE **Arx** Limelight 01270 251929
DUBLIN **Miriam Ingram** Whelans 00 3531 478 0766
DUNDALK **The Thrills** Spirit Stores 00 35342 935 2697
LEICESTER **Beat Route 62/Liberty Ship/Innuendo** Attik 0116 222 3800
Steve Cartwright/Paul McClure Musician 0116 251 0080
LONDON **Lizzie B** Oakwood Merry Hills N14 020 8886 1177
The Bullets Charing Cross Road Borderline WC2 020 7734 2095
Carbon 4/The Future Of Junior/Kody Jo King's Cross Water Rats WC1 020 7436 7211
The Clams/Opium Pillowcase Camden Barfly @ The Monarch NW1 0870 907 0999
Count Me Out/Sworn In Camden Underworld NW1 020 7482 1932
Damage Camden Jazz Cafe NW1 020 7916 6060
Douglas Camden Palace NW1 020 7387 0428
Last Ditch Effort/Crossface/Room 237/Isor Islington Hope'n'Anchor N1 020 7378 6095
Ben Mitchell Camden Fusilier & Firkin NW1 020 7485 7858
Monty Hario/Crafty/Miniflsh Kentish Town Bull & Gate NW5 020 7485 5358
Oracle Putney Half Moon SW15 020 8780 9383
Snuff Movie Stars/Hanuman/Magicdrive/
The Mutts/Captain Scarlet Camden Dublin Castle NW1 020 7485 1773
The Vaults/Junkbox Highbury Corner Buffalo Bar N1 020 7359 6191
Sion Whiley Baker Street Kashmir Club W1 020 7223 5347
NOTTINGHAM **Dawn Parade** Rock City 0115 941 2544
PENICUIK **Jez Lowe** Navar House 0131 667 2828
TUNBRIDGE WELLS **InMe/Crackout** Forum 01892 530411
WIDNES **Darren Poyzer** Ring O'Bells 0151 424 5060
WOLVERHAMPTON **Tori Amos** Civic Hall 01902 552121

NOW BOOKING

For tickets, ring the 24-hour NME ticketline on 0870 1 663 663. Calls are charged at national standard rate

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES
Camber Sands Holiday Centre (April 4-6). Acts include Aphex Twin/Public Enemy/The Fall/Jim O'Rourke/Cannibal Ox/Venetian Snares

AMEN
Birmingham Academy 2 (January 31), Manchester University (February 1), Leeds Cockpit (2), Newcastle University Of Northumbria (4), Glasgow Cathouse (5), Aberdeen Lemon Tree (6), Sheffield Leadmill (7), Leicester Charlotte (8), Newport TJ's (9), Bristol Fleece & Firkin (10), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (11), Brighton Concorde 2 (12), Tunbridge Wells Forum (14), London WC1 ULU (15)

AUDIOSLAVE
London WC2 Astoria (January 17)

BOWLING FOR SOUP
Leicester De Montfort University (February 13), Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall (14), Glasgow Barrowlands (15), Newcastle University (16), Leeds Metropolitan University (17), Liverpool University (18), Cardiff University (19), Norwich UEA (21), Southampton Guildhall (22), Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall (23), Cambridge Corn Exchange (24), Nottingham Rock City (25), Bristol Academy (26), London WC2 Astoria (28)

COLDPLAY
Manchester Evening News Arena (April 14), London Earls Court Exhibition Hall (16 & 17)

THE CORAL
Dublin Ambassador Theatre (February 2), Belfast Limelight (3), Glasgow Barrowlands (5), Aberdeen Music Hall (6), Middlesbrough Town Hall (7), Manchester Academy (8), Portsmouth Pyramids Centre (10), Cardiff University (12), Norwich UEA (14), Oxford Brookes University (15)

DEDBEAT 3
Hemsby Pontin's Holiday Village (February 28-March 2). Acts include Multiplex/Super Collider/Cassette Boy

THE DELGADOS
Leeds City Varieties (January 29), Manchester University (30), London Shepherds Bush Empire (31), Brighton Pavilion Theatre (February 1), Birmingham Academy (2), Newcastle University Of Northumbria (3), Glasgow QMU (4)

THE EIGHTIES MATCHBOX B-LINE DISASTER
Coventry Colosseum (January 16), London Highbury Corner Garage (17), Hanley Sugarmill (18), Edinburgh Venue (19)

ELECTRIC SIX
Brighton Concorde 2 (January 30), London WC1 ULU (31), Oxford Zodiac (February 1), Cardiff Barfly (2), Manchester University, Hop And Grape (4), Liverpool Barfly @ Masque (5), Edinburgh Venue (7), Glasgow Barfly (8), Nottingham Rock City (9)

SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR
Grimsby Auditorium (January 15 & 16), Preston Guildhall (17), Glasgow Clyde Auditorium (19), Belfast Waterfront (20), Dublin Ambassador Theatre (21), Newcastle City Hall (23), Nottingham Royal Concert Hall (24), Sheffield City Hall (25), Liverpool Royal Court (27), Wolverhampton Civic Hall (28), Cambridge Corn Exchange (29), Cardiff International Arena (31), Manchester Apollo (February 1), Plymouth Pavilions (2), Brighton Centre (4), London Hammersmith Apollo (5)

FEEDER
Dublin Ambassador Theatre (February 8), Belfast Limelight (9), Norwich UEA (11), Southampton Guildhall (12), Brighton Dome (13), Ipswich Regent Theatre (15), Oxford Brookes University (16), Cambridge Corn Exchange (18), Nottingham Rock City (19), Manchester Apollo (21), Glasgow Barrowlands (22, March 12), Aberdeen Music Hall (23), Newcastle University Of Northumbria (25), Leeds University (26), Liverpool Royal Court (27), Newport Centre (March 1), Birmingham Academy (2), Bristol Colston Hall (4), Exeter University (5), London Brixton Academy (7 & 8), Dundee Caird Hall (11)

THE FLAMING LIPS
Glasgow Barrowlands (January 15), Manchester Academy (16), Birmingham Academy (17), Bristol Academy (18), Nottingham Rock City (20), London Kentish Town Forum (21 & 22)

GET UP KIDS
Manchester University, Hop And Grape (January 15)

DAVID HOLMES PRESENTS THE FREE ASSOCIATION
London Shepherds Bush Empire (March 14), Manchester University, Hop And Grape (15)

IDLEWILD
Derry Nerve Centre (January 30), Belfast Mandela Hall (31), Dublin Ambassador Theatre (February 1), Whitehaven Civic Hall (3), Aberdeen Music Hall (5), Glasgow Barrowlands (6), Cardiff University (7)

JAY-Z
London Wembley Arena (January 31), Manchester Evening News Arena (February 2) Kinesis Bath Moles (February 8), Liverpool Barfly @ Masque (9), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (10), York Fibbers (11), Manchester University, Hop And Grape (12), Bristol Louisiana (14), Oxford Zodiac (15), Cardiff Barfly (16), Leeds Rocket (17), Wolverhampton Little Civic (18), London Camden Underworld (19), Cambridge Boat Race (21), Harlow Square (22), Exeter Cavern Club (24), Southampton Joiners (25), Derby Victoria Inn (26), Tunbridge Wells Forum (28), Bedford Esquires (March 1)

AVRIL LAVIGNE
Birmingham Academy (March 20), Manchester Apollo (21), Glasgow Barrowlands (22), Dublin Olympia (23), London Brixton Academy (25-27)

LEMON JELLY
Dublin Ambassador Theatre (February 22), Cambridge Junction (24), Birmingham Academy (25), Brighton Concorde 2 (26), Manchester University, MDH (28), Glasgow QMU (March 1), Edinburgh Queen's Hall (2), Bristol Academy (4), London Kentish Town Forum (7)

THE LIBERTINES
Sheffield Leadmill (February 22), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (23), Liverpool Stanley Theatre (24), Nottingham Rescue Rooms (25)

LOW
Dublin Ambassador Theatre (January 31), Edinburgh Queen's Hall (February 3), Aberdeen Lemon Tree (4), Glasgow QMU (5), Newcastle University (6), Manchester University, MDH (7), Leeds Parish Church (8), Birmingham Academy 2 (10), Bristol Academy (11), Brighton St George's Church (12), London Islington Union Chapel (14)

MASSIVE ATTACK
Glasgow Academy (April 8 & 9), Manchester Apollo (11 & 12), London Brixton Academy (16 & 17)

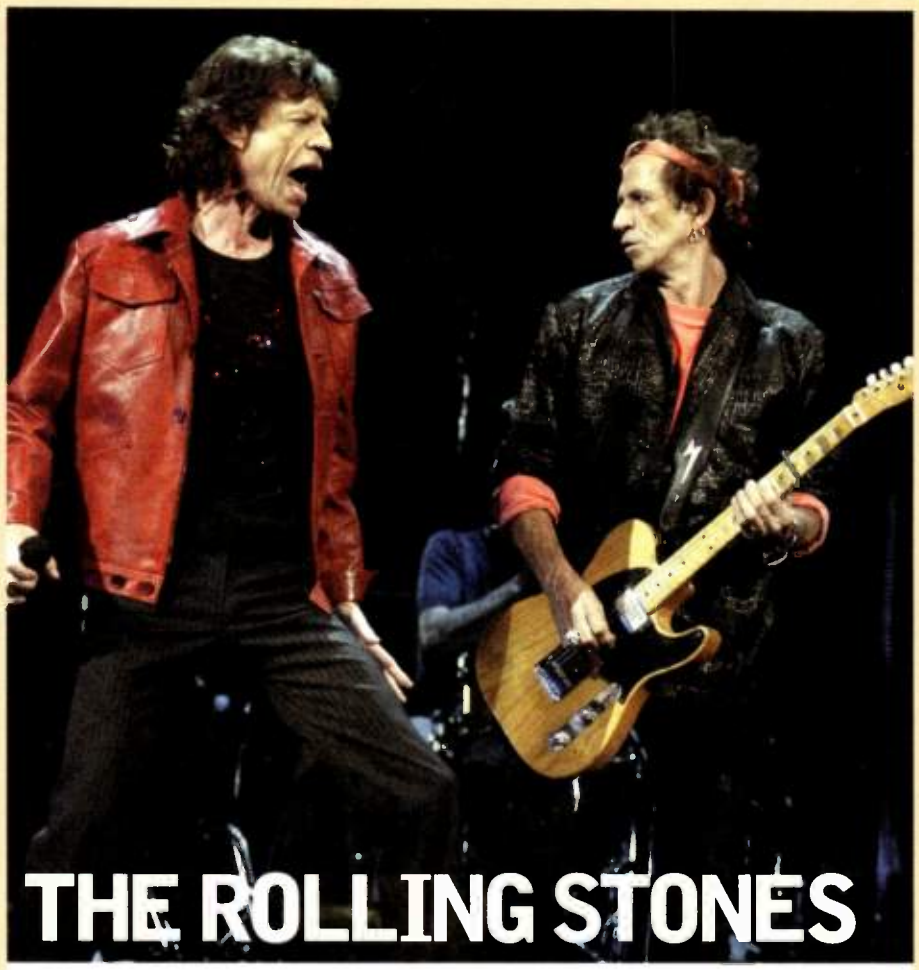
MULL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (January 28), London Shepherds Bush Bush Hall (30), Newcastle University Of Northumbria (March 26), Birmingham Academy 2 (27), Sheffield Leadmill (29), Liverpool Stanley Theatre (30), Bristol Fleece & Firkin (31), Brighton Concorde 2 (April 1), London Shepherds Bush Empire (3), Manchester University (4), Glasgow Barrowlands (5)

NME AWARDS SHOWS 2003
Starsailor/Nada Surf/The 22-20's/Hope Of The States (February 4), Nas (5), The Cooper Temple Clause/Ladytron/Ikara Colt/The Raveonettes (6), AFI/Face Of Tomorrow/Kinesis (7), Idlewild/Cave-In/The Beatings/My Morning Jacket (8), The Datsuns/The Polyphonic Spree/ Interpol/The Thrills (9), Saves The Day/The BellRays/Hell Is For Heroes (10), The Coral/The Basement/Sleepy Jackson/Kings Of Leon (11), The Libertines/The Sights/The Hiss (12) at the London WC2 Astoria. The Streets play London Brixton Academy (February 7)

NME AWARDS TOUR 2003 WITH THE DATSUNS/THE POLYPHONIC SPREE/INTERPOL/THE THRILLS
Dublin Ambassador Theatre featuring The Datsuns/The Beatings/The Thrills (January 24), Glasgow Barrowlands (26), Newcastle University Of Northumbria (27), Birmingham Academy (28), Sheffield Foundry (30), Liverpool University, Mountford Hall (31), Manchester Academy (February 1), Leeds Metropolitan University (3), Nottingham Rock City (4), Norwich UEA (5), Portsmouth Pyramids Centre (7), Cardiff University (8), London WC2 Astoria (9)

NAS
London Kentish Town Forum (February 22)

BETH ORTON
Wolverhampton Civic Hall (March 25), Edinburgh Usher Hall (26), Manchester



THE ROLLING STONES

The Stones – one of the most important rock'n'roll bands in the world – have unveiled their plans for a European tour, including three dates in London. For these events, the band have rehearsed over 50 tracks and will play different sets each night – all promoting their 'Forty Licks' album, a compilation spanning their career from 1962-2002. Having changed the face of pop music along with The Beatles in the '60s, The Stones' no-nonsense approach to bluesy rock courses through the veins of newcomers such as The White Stripes, The Hives and The Libertines. See where it all started at the Twickenham Stadium (August 23), London WC2 Astoria (27) and London Wembley Arena (29).

Academy (27), Brighton Dome (29), Portsmouth Guildhall (30), London South Kensington Royal Albert Hall (31)

RAGING SPEEDHORN
Newport TJ's (January 19), Plymouth JFK's, Club 103 (20), Bridgwater Palace (21), Cambridge Junction (22), Hull University (23), Liverpool Stanley Theatre (24), Leeds Cockpit (25), Edinburgh Liquid Rooms (26), Dundee Fat Sam's (27), Aberdeen Lemon Tree (28), Whitehaven Civic Hall (29), Belfast Art College, Conor Hall (30), Dublin Tivoli (February 1), Waterford Forum (2), Swansea Patti Pavilion (3), Sunderland University (4), Coventry Colosseum (5), Leicester Charlotte (6), Oxford Zodiac (7), Tunbridge Wells Forum (8), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (9), London WC2 Astoria with Ministry (March 2)

THE RAVEONETTES
Wolverhampton Little Civic (February 3), Glasgow King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (4), Newcastle University (5), Leeds University (8), Northampton Soundhaus (9), Norwich Arts Centre (10), Manchester Roadhouse (11), Nottingham Rock City (13), London W1 100 Club (14), Cardiff Barfly (15), Brighton Freebutt (16)

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS/THE MARS VOLTA
Glasgow SECC (March 5 & 6), London Docklands Arena (8 & 9), Manchester Evening News Arena (11 & 12)

REM
Glastonbury Festival (June 27), Kinross T in The Park Festival (July 12), Manchester Move Festival (13), Dublin Marley Park (16)

THE SIGHTS
London Camden Barfly @ The Monarch (February 24)

SIGUR ROS
Glasgow Barrowlands (February 11), London Hammersmith Apollo (12)

JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION
Nottingham Rock City (January 30), London South Bank Royal Festival Hall (31)

JOHN SQUIRE
Belfast Limelight (January 24), Dublin Ambassador Theatre (25), Aberdeen Music Hall (27), Glasgow Barrowlands (28), Newcastle University Of Northumbria (30), Leeds University (31), Manchester Ritz (February 2 & 3), Sheffield Leadmill (5), London Shepherds Bush Empire (6)

STONE SOUR
Glasgow Barrowlands (February 19), Newcastle University (20), Birmingham Academy (21), Manchester Academy (22), Nottingham Rock City (24), Bristol Academy (25), London WC2 Astoria (26)

SUGABABES
Manchester Academy (March 26), Liverpool Royal Court (27), Glasgow Academy (28), York Barbican Centre (29), Cambridge Corn Exchange (31), Southampton Guildhall (April 1), Bristol Academy (2), Nottingham Royal Centre (4), London Shepherds Bush Empire (5)

SUM 41
Manchester Evening News Arena (February 1), Nottingham Arena (2), Glasgow Braehead Arena (3), Dublin Point (4), Cardiff International Arena (6), Plymouth Pavilions (7), London Wembley Arena (8)

SUPERGRASS/THE RAVEONETTES
Edinburgh Corn Exchange (January 22), York Barbican Centre (23), Manchester Apollo (24), London Wembley Arena with The Datsuns/The Polyphonic Spree (25)

TAPROOT
Bristol Fleece & Firkin (January 19), Birmingham Academy 2 (20), Leeds Cockpit (21), Glasgow Garage (22), Manchester University, Hop And Grape (23), London WC2 Mean Fiddler (25), Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms (26)

THE THRILLS
Belfast Auntie Annie's (January 15), Derry Nerve Centre (16), Kilkenny Cleere's Theatre (17), Cork Lobby Bar (18), Southampton Joiners (21), London Aldgate East 93 Feet East (22)

TURIN BRAKES
Belfast Limelight (February 19), Dublin Ambassador Theatre (21), Cardiff University (22), Aberdeen Music Hall (24), Glasgow Barrowlands (25), Newcastle University (26), Manchester Academy (28), Liverpool University (March 1), Lancaster Sugarhouse (2), Birmingham Academy (4), Leeds University (5), Sheffield Octagon (6), Leicester De Montfort University (7), Nottingham Rock City (9), Norwich UEA (10), Brighton Dome (11), Cambridge Corn Exchange (12), Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall (14), Portsmouth Pyramids Centre (15), Bristol Academy (16), Exeter University, Lemon Grove (17), Oxford Brookes University (19), London Brixton Academy (20)

ROBBIE WILLIAMS
Edinburgh Murrayfield Stadium (June 28 & 29), Stevenage Knebworth Park (August 1-3), Dublin Phoenix Park (August 9)

ZWAN
London Shepherds Bush Empire (February 12)

NME TICKETLINE 0870 1 663 663

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDY WILLSHER/ELLIS PARRINDER/PA

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2 COVENTRY COLLOSEUM 024 7655 4473
4 COLCHESTER ARTS CENTRE 0120 650 0900
5 READING UNIVERSITY 0118 986 0222
6 BRISTOL FLEECE 0117 929 9008
7 CARDIFF BARFLY 0870 907 0999
8 LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY 0151 256 5555
10 LEICESTER CHARLOTTE 01162 553 956
11 STOKE SUGARMILL 01782 206 000
12 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY 0115 941 2544
13 LEEDS COCKPIT 0113 245 5570
14 HULL ADELPHI 01482 348 216
15 ABERDEEN LAVA 0141 339 8383
16 GLASGOW KING TUTS 0141 339 8383
18 EDINBURGH VENUE 0141 339 8383
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20 MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY 0161 832 1111
21 STOCKTON GEORGIAN THEATRE 01642 674 115
22 BIRMINGHAM ACADEMY 2 0870 771 2000
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thu 13 glasgow qmu 0870 169 0100
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mon 17 exeter phoenix 01392 425 309
wed 19 northampton roadmenders 01604 604 222
thu 20 portsmouth wedgewood rooms 023 9286 3911
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Wednesday 05 LIVERPOOL BARFLY 0870 907 0999
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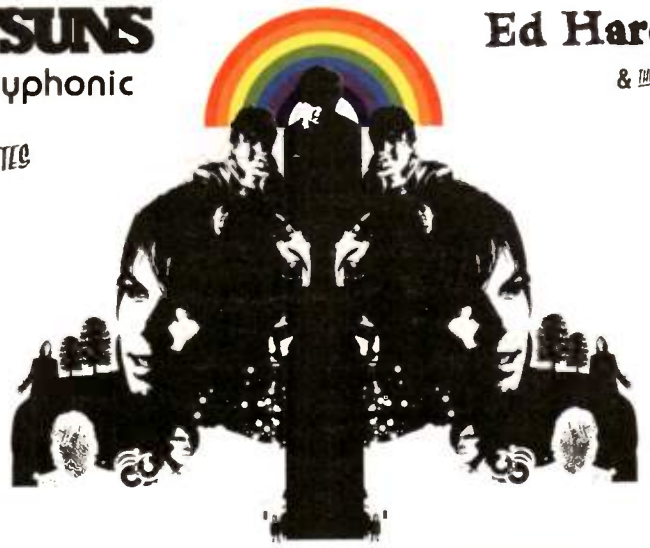

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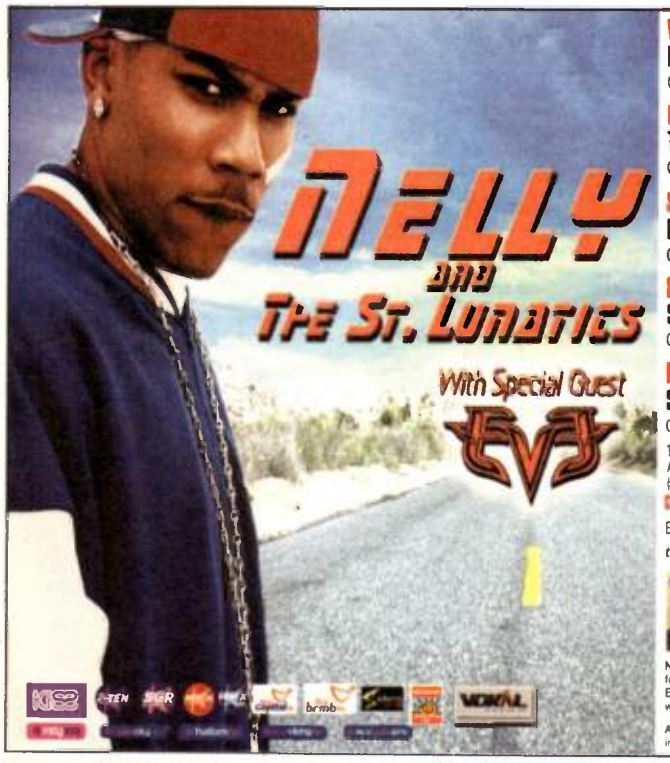

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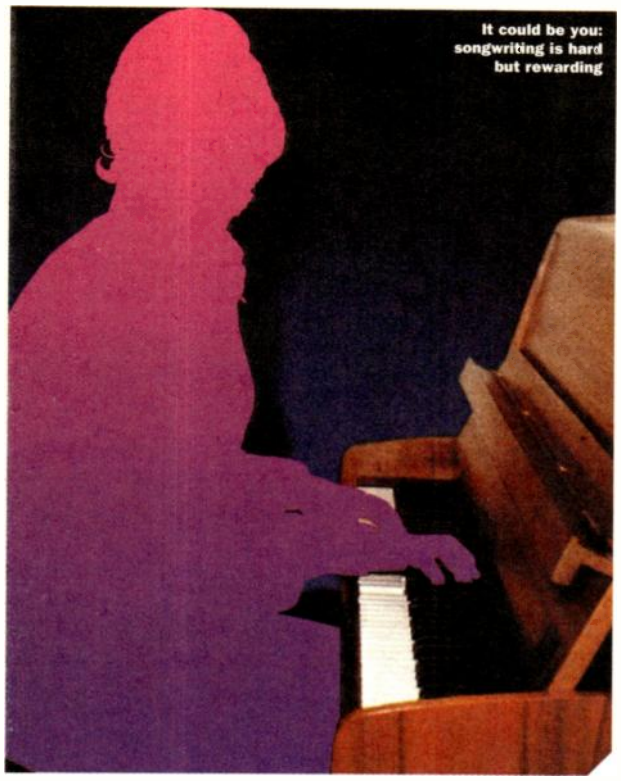
HOW TO WRITE SONGS

The road to becoming a songwriter is hard but rewarding

Writing songs may seem easy, but writing good songs is harder. The more you do it, though, the easier it becomes. There are three approaches to this most mysterious of arts: going solo, the group effort or a blend of the two – starting an idea on your own, then finding other musicians to help finish it off.

The solo songwriter carries the full burden of songwriting alone: words, tune and arrangement, all of which requires a disciplined mind and a solid understanding of how songs work. It's a tough road, no question, and you'll have no creative support during a dry spell – never underestimate the benefits another musical brain can bring to an idea.



It could be you: songwriting is hard but rewarding

The group writing process is much more common and a lot more fun, whether it's the band getting together to expand one person's idea or the whole band jamming from scratch in search of a riff that becomes a groove that evolves into a song. Although initially liberating, for some writers the inherent compromises in this approach are too great. Before you know it, that age-old chestnut "musical differences" rears its ugly head and your best mate/lead guitarist has disappeared to pursue his love of Bavarian folk music. If you're writing as a group, heated arguments are guaranteed.

In truth, neither writing approach (solo or group) is perfect in isolation. The solo control freak often misses the creative spark that collaboration brings, while the jamming group frequently lacks the self-editing discipline. The best songs often come when one writer with a good idea gets help from sympathetic musicians – that's when the real magic happens.

Whatever your approach, bear in mind that songwriting doesn't come naturally. It's a skill and it has to be learned. Don't think that the music will just flow out of you: most of your early songs will probably suck and, much as you love them, eventually you'll admit it. Take the time to learn your craft, finish every song you start (even if you hate it) and aim high – your songs should be every bit as good as the artists you hope to emulate.

Analyse your favourite songs. What do you like about them? Well-written songs make good use of dynamics (loud bit/quiet bit), tension (music building up) and atmosphere (lyrics, vocal style). It's practically a formula – invariably, the chorus is louder and sung higher than the verse, so the song builds up, sails over the bridge (the bit before the chorus), hits the tuneage motherlode in the chorus, then either continues this high-velocity momentum into the guitar solo or breaks down for another verse. Ask Noel Gallagher, he'll tell you.

New song ideas can come from anywhere. Words first, music first, a single line or riff that inspires the rest of the song: if it works for you, do it. Write what you want, from the heart and from your own record collection and you'll strike a chord with someone.

Most songs are based on the tried and tested intro/verse/chorus/verse/chorus/solo/chorus to fade approach – 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' is a textbook pop song in this mould – but don't be afraid to bend the rules. They're there to be broken, after all.

Jonathan Wilson

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDY FALLON/LFI

MY WAY

Songwriting the Polyphonic Spree way with Tim DeLaughter

Songwriting is Spree-sy for Tim DeLaughter

How do you write songs?
"I just sit down at a piano or a guitar and start playing. The music provokes a thought and I'll start singing about it and improvising lyrics and it just kinda plays itself out. It's really that simple. I just kind of sing about what I'm seeing in my head."

Do you deliberately sit down to write a song?
"No, not at all. It's usually a case of, 'Wow, I haven't picked that guitar up' or 'I haven't sat down at the piano for a while' and the first chord I hit I'll know if I'm going to able to go any further with it. If it doesn't feel right, I'll just stop and walk away. My biggest problem is that once I'm on a roll, I don't want to stop."

Has this always been your approach?
"Tripping Daisy *(Tim's previous band)* was more of a jamming situation, where I'd write in the room with everybody else. With the Spree, I do it at home then I take it to the rehearsal space, play it for everybody and we start adding instruments. The song's the skeleton and then we bring it in and start adding the organs, the muscles and everything else until it's finished."

Does this approach require more discipline?
"With Tripping Daisy there was only four of us, so it didn't get so chaotic – it was easier to pull it together when you were jamming. With The Polyphonic Spree, it's really important to have it all mapped out before we get in there because you're dealing with so many instruments."

What advice do you have for budding songwriters?
"Just start doing it. Don't really worry about what people think. Just be sure that you're turning yourself on because whether you know it or not, if you're turning yourself on then you've got your craft down. You just keep doing it and before you know it, you're a songwriter."

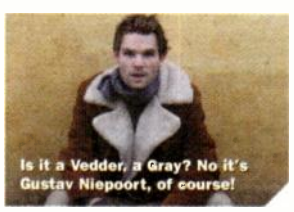
HOLLY'S DEMO HELL

Holly Hernandez reviews your demos

NIEPOORT
Confrontation

While this offering from Gustav Niepoort is very mature and accomplished, I can't help thinking that he loves himself a bit too much and would like nothing better that to be thought of as Eddie Vedder doing David Gray. To be fair, however, it's a fairly trite comparison: he has a ripe voice vaguely reminiscent of a cleaner Vedder and his songs are no way near as Van Morrison-esque as Gray's. Essentially, he's a serious chap and his work is pleasing, if just a little pompous.

INFO: gustavniepoort@hotmail.com



Is it a Vedder, a Gray? No it's Gustav Niepoort, of course!

THE GOODGES
Heaven On Earth

The CD cover features, oh, about 50 goths sitting on glaciers and standing on water under a grey sky. Not so much 'Heaven On Earth' as the Limelight in Alaska, then. The Goodges themselves are a young married couple from the Scottish Highlands who profess that their work "arrives unedited from the soul, addressed to the soul of all who wish to listen". Hate them yet? Hard not to.

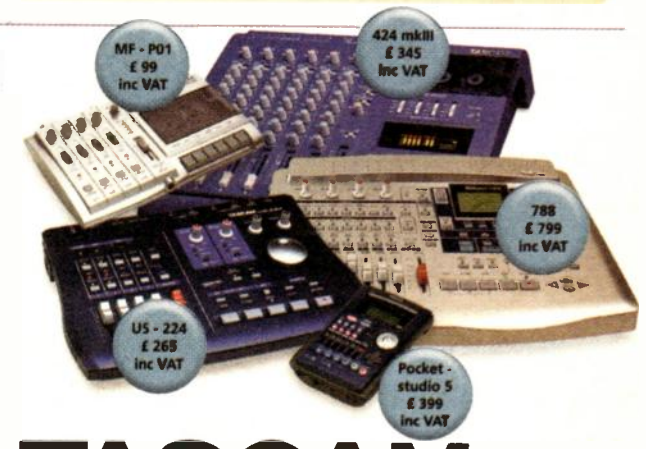
And so this unedited work arrives with jubilant guitars and rousing, authoritarian vocals. I can only assume they own Killing Joke's entire back catalogue.

INFO: 01445 712549

CINEMAFOR
Panic Attack

Cinemafor inspire descriptions like 'engrossing intensity' that are exactly what they were after. They also prompted one commentator to liken them to Muse, which is never a good thing. They are given to displays of operatic drama, but that's all part of the cinematic soundscape they're trying to project. Singer Innis Stiles' voice has traces of Billy Corgan, while his more tigerish moments are indeed more akin to, yikes, Matt Bellamy.

INFO: 01274 597389



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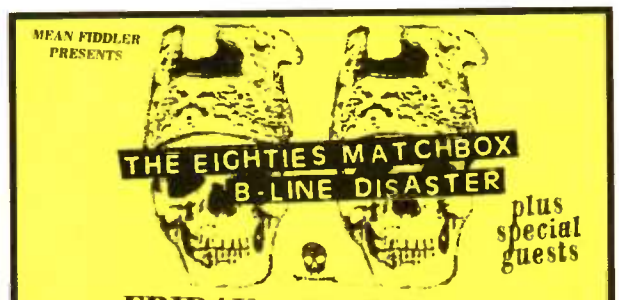

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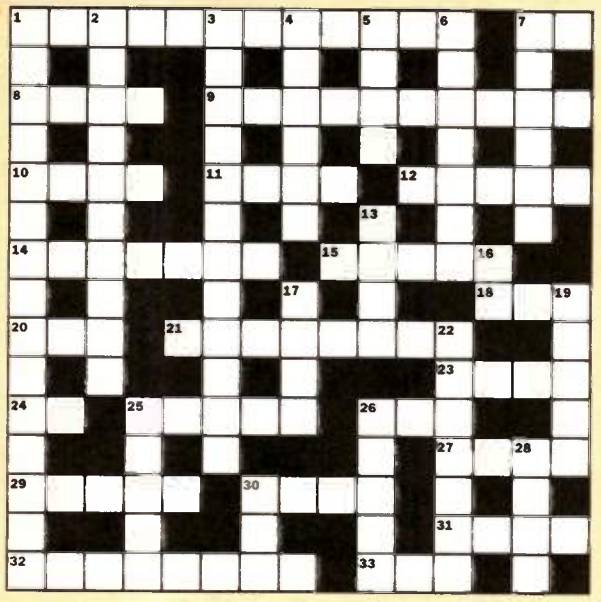

CLUES ACROSS

1+21A This cut's 'In Too Deep' and... ooo-er... (4-4-4-8)

7+10A+11A *"__ ___ _ ____, she's my baby/__ ___ _ ____, I don't mean maybe"*, 1956 (2-3-1-4)

8+25A Member of The Coral who could steal position of authority (4-5)

9 (See 1 down)

10+11A (See 7 across)

12 Band in which Hamish Rosser replaced David Oliffe on drums (5)

14 Once given the accolade of being Kurt Cobain's favourite band (7)

15 (See 23 across)

18 Flying ___, indie record label based in New Zealand (3)

20 Keep your hair on! It's Hüsker Dü's 'Flip Your ___' (3)

21 (See 1 across)

23+15A+30A Oh, OK. Bung a live turn on doing an Elvis Presley (1-3-4-1-4)

24 Nelly can take a number from the beginning of either (2)

25 (See 8 across)

26+28D Black Grape, being at large, get collared (3-4)

27 (See 25 down)

29 As bassist Martin Glover, formerly with Killing Joke, is better known (5)

30 (See 23 across)

31 Prog rock band who charted with their version of 'America' (4)

32 Sixties group whose hits included 'Young Girl' (5-3)

33 Film starring David Bradley as Billy Casper and Colin Welland as Mr Farthing (3)

CLUES DOWN

1+9A Damon Albarn sets himself certain standards in the John Smith's diving competition (4-4-4-3-3-3-4)

2 Being 'way out' is down to an art form with Robbie Williams (10)

3 Edwin Starr performance that made the front page (8-4)

4+19D A gag line he's rewriting for PJ Harvey (6-2-3)

5 Phil ____, US singer/songwriter once tagged the 'new Bob Dylan' (4)

6 Director of *A Clockwork Orange* and *2001 – A Space Odyssey* (7)

7 Happy Mondays' music that made me dumb, somehow (6)

13 Singles include 'Sweet Soul Sister' and 'She Sells Sanctuary' (4)

16 The Aphex Twin in the middle of a song (2)

17 The dread spelt out by Ian Brown (1-1-1-1)

19 (See 4 down)

22 They're top of the bill on the *NME* Carling Awards Tour 2003 (7)

25+27A Gorky's Zygotic Mynci with a performance from the back garden (5-4)

26 That abnormal person with Strangelove (5)

28 (See 26 across)

30 Member of Slade – get in please! (3)

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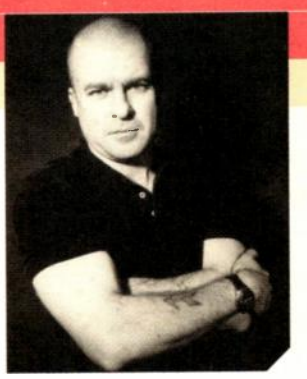


TALES OF THE PARA-ABNORMAL

You're probably not going to believe this but me and my mate Tim spent Christmas Eve with Liam Gallagher and he is not the crap bastard everybody thinks he is. It all started on Christmas Eve morning when me and Tim were trying to get a hitch out of Manchester back to Leeds (we'd been to see Calgaro Spit – top band why haven't you done them yet?). Anyway, as anyone who has tried can tell you, hitching out of Manchester is a bastard.

We'd been there hours, freezing our bollocks off, when this stretch limo pulls up. Only with a chauffeur! "Where you going to, lads? Leeds? Sorry, we're going the other way."

"Fooking get in the fooking car!" says this Manc voice. So we pile in the back and there s this bloke there, his face covered in bandages and wearing shades – just like the invisible man.

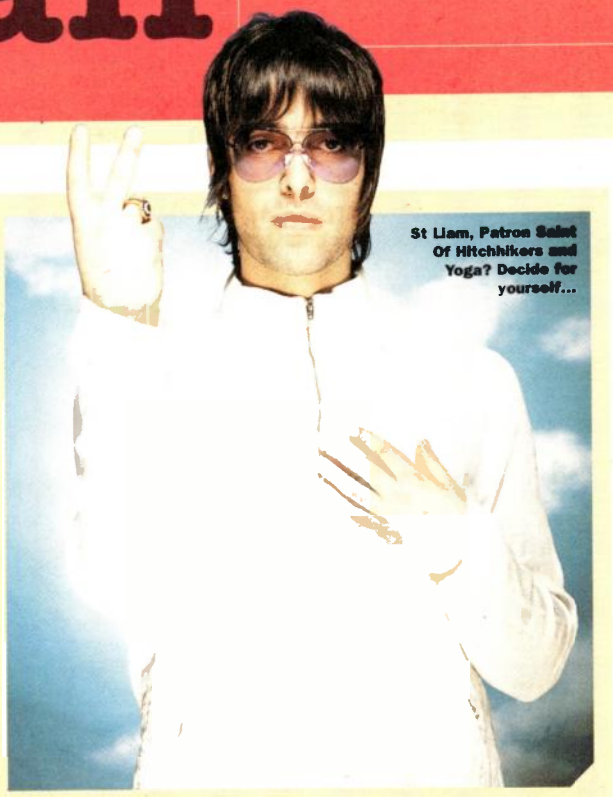
"S'cuse the bandages, lads " he says, "Got meself fucking twatted to fook by some Eyeties!"

Anyway, to cut a long story short, Liam refused to take us to Leeds ("Fooking Tyke shit-hole!") but took us to this party at his place in Cheshire instead. It was the best party I've ever been to. Loads of celebs – most of the Man City team, that *Jackass* bloke, Coldplay, half of Corrie, Phill Jupitus, Weller – it was amazing.

But the point I want make is that we had a long chat with Liam and he's not a twat. He's a really nice bloke. He says he knows he's got a temper problem but he's trying to control it with Shiatsu and acupuncture. And that he s been learning yoga with Geri Halliwell who is his new friend "but that fooking dog of hers is a c—t".

Just thought you'd like to know.

Corporal Brian Hazard, 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment (Territorial), New Pudsey Barracks, West Yorks



St Liam, Patron Saint Of Hitchhikers and Yoga? Decide for yourself...

PS Any fit birds want to write to us when we're slipping and sliding in blood and being nerve gassed to fuck in Iraq in a couple of months

Well, girls? Any takers? Don't know about you, but there's just something about this that doesn't quite ring true. Can't quite put my finger on it. Maybe it's that it's a well known fact that Liam is a huuuuuuge dog-lover. And the idea that he'd call Geri's ball of sofa-shagging fluff a 'c—t' verges, frankly, on the unbelievable – SW

THE CORAL: HANGING TOO GOOD?

I thought John Mulvey's article (*NME*, Dec 21/28) on the daftly titled but utterly brilliant new rock revolution was great, but I think it's now time to move on. Any revolution worth its salt has to pause at some stage and purge its ranks of the backsliders. This is the way I see it – Strokes, White Stripes, Datsuns, Vines, Eighties Matchbox, Radio 4, D4, Ikara Colt, Hives, Yeah Yeah Yeahs – they are all cool rock'n'roll motherf—ers and can stay. But The Coral and The Libertines have to be shot. I mean, come on – the fucking Libertines? They're like the cast of *Oliver!* on ugly drugs! The Music can suck my scabby shit-stick as well, the ponces. Not too sure about BRMC – they look cool but I suspect they're a bunch of smacked-up neds. And one band that should be on the list of real rock revolutionaries is The Distillers – but they're probably too down and dirty for you lily-livered London journalist types.

Anna Rancid, Leeds

NME, stick your so-called rock revolution up your arse! There *are* loads of great bands out there doing gigs and putting out great demos and the sad fact is that you've never heard of any of them. How come you have never mentioned Bench Press, Remoter, Affa, Billhook, The Gavins, Terry Sunshine, We Want, Dental Sticks, Frisbee, Investigation, T&S and Mellow? You are so out of touch you might as well call yourself *Shit* and be done with it.

Vyvian Volvic, Spraymount fanzine, Chingford

Yo, Viv, we have heard of ALL of those bands and the fact is that they're all shit. And so are you. And your fanzine. And your mum. Sorry – SW

RAGING SPEEDHORN: NOT GAY ENOUGH TO ROCK SHOCK

Your Jackass Xxxmas article (*NME*, Dec 21/28) was very revealing. These Neanderthal troglodytes Raging Speedhorn were willing to smash each other about and risk death with high explosives but were too pussy to get stuck into a little bit of man-on-man action under the mistletoe. That's the trouble with modern metal – it's full of cowardly breeders too shit-scared to do what the music tells them. Which, for the metalphobic among you is FUCK MEN! Hard. Let's face it, heterosexuality is un-metal. So I'm afraid we're going to have to take Raging Speedhorn's name away from them. From now on you will be called Raging Coldplay. Ya pussies.

CB de Mille, via email

PINK'S NOT CRED

Pink (*NME*, Dec 14). Why is that skanky fat bitch everywhere? I'm sick of seeing her bloated fat arse every time I open a magazine. I want to read about real music not some deranged banshee with an iffy boat-race whining off-key about mental illness and shit.

JPK, via email

Jeez, JPK, could the reason that you hate women so much be something to do with the fact that you ain't getting any? And could the reason you ain't getting any be anything to do with the fact that you hate women? The fact, sad lad, is that Pink is at least as great a poet as any of the male rock types featured in these pages – and a damn sight more talented than most of them. It's only your puerile gynophobia that's stopping you seeing it – SW

RAH RAH RAH – WE'RE GOING TO SHAG THE OIKS!

Can I just say – on behalf of five very randy public schoolgirls – thank you very much for this new rock revolution (or the new cock revolution as we call it). Never has such a droolsome collection of shaggable male flesh been gathered under one banner. Where are they all coming from? We notice that there are almost no fat or ugly blokes apart from The Hives. Whatever, the result is that you've made five posh 'birds' very happy. Keep them coming.

The Hellfire Club, Hampshire

My god! Young Sophie Ellis-Bextor clones! Look out, she's spawning! These truly are great days for pop – SW

SARCASM, CYNICISM AND NIT-PICKING ALIVE AND WELL IN '03 – YAY!

My mum bought me the Coldplay album "so you can play something the whole family can listen to for once". Thanks guys!

Big Gavin, Nottingham

The role of *NME* has changed over the years – from bland pop rag to punk bible to *Manchester Courier* to *Britpop Bugle* and now the *Pravda* of the new rock revolution. But the role of the Christmas issue has never changed. It provides an oasis of piss-taking, cruelty and (most importantly) creative swearing among all the forced 'niceness' of the typical Christmas. And this year's issue had some of the best swearing for years. Once again you have kept me sane, Thank you.

Chuff McDuff, Glasgow

TRASH MAN GETS SHIRTY

Re: Kelly Osbourne (*NME*, *Jukebox Fury* Dec 21/28). My quote on "some fat bird getting all the attention" was relating to the fact that some people take the piss out of her for her size and the way she acts. That was the "crap point" I was making. Taking the piss out of people who take the piss. The way you trimmed my quote made it look cruel, when it was never meant to. Still not a fan of the record, though. Print this letter or I'll never speak to you bastards again.

Erol Alkan, London.

It has been pointed out in the *NME* office that by ever-so-slightly 'trimming' this letter it could read "I speak crap to fat bastards for attention". Which pretty much sums up Erol's part in our Xmas issue. Lovely bloke, though – SW

PS...

From the darkest recesses of the NMEmail bag

The Xmas *NME* was brilliant! Why don't you do it every week?

Sarah, via email

Why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why?

Upset, Tunbridge Wells

Any chance of you not being gay and taking the piss out of the King of Pop – Michael Jackson this year?

Michael Jackson's Number One Fan, via email

I spent Boxing Day eating cold turkey sandwiches and listening to Black Rebel Motorcycle Club – ironic, huh?

Terry, via email

Juju gonna get you. Know where yo' mojo at. Yeah, say juju gonna get you, he know where yo' mojo at. Have mercy.

Blind Dog Willy, Hull

PICTURE THIS

LAWRENCE THOMPSON, LONDON
"At the Oasis Finsbury Shows we bumped into.... ONLY KELLY FUCKING JONES!! I nearly died!"

PAUL O'REILLY, DUBLIN
"Here's me and my mate Fergz with Mr Richard Ashcroft. We met him in Dublin before his show which was amazing!"

SARAH WEATHERSTON, ABERDEEN
"This is my boyfriend Rob with Jonny Buckland and Will Champion in Edinburgh in June."

SARAH, USA
"This picture is of me, Patrick, and Craig of The Vines. It was taken in July, 2002 at the Theater of Living Arts in Philadelphia."

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